This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

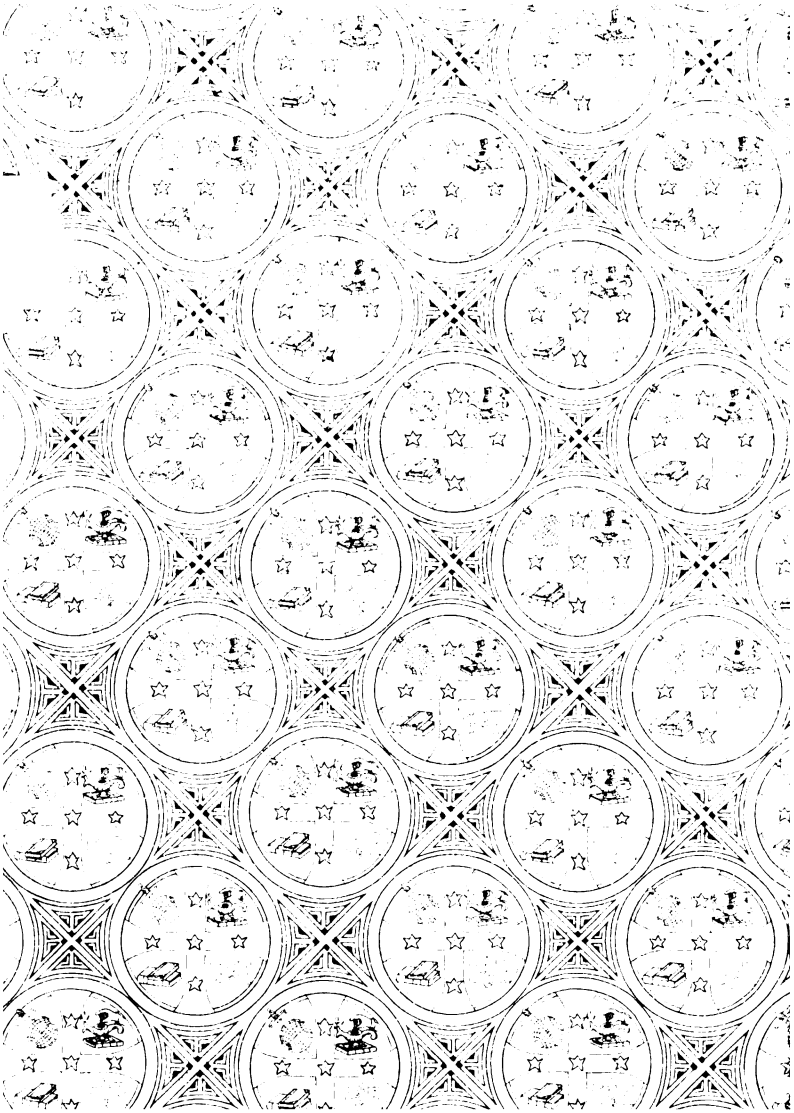
About Google Book Search

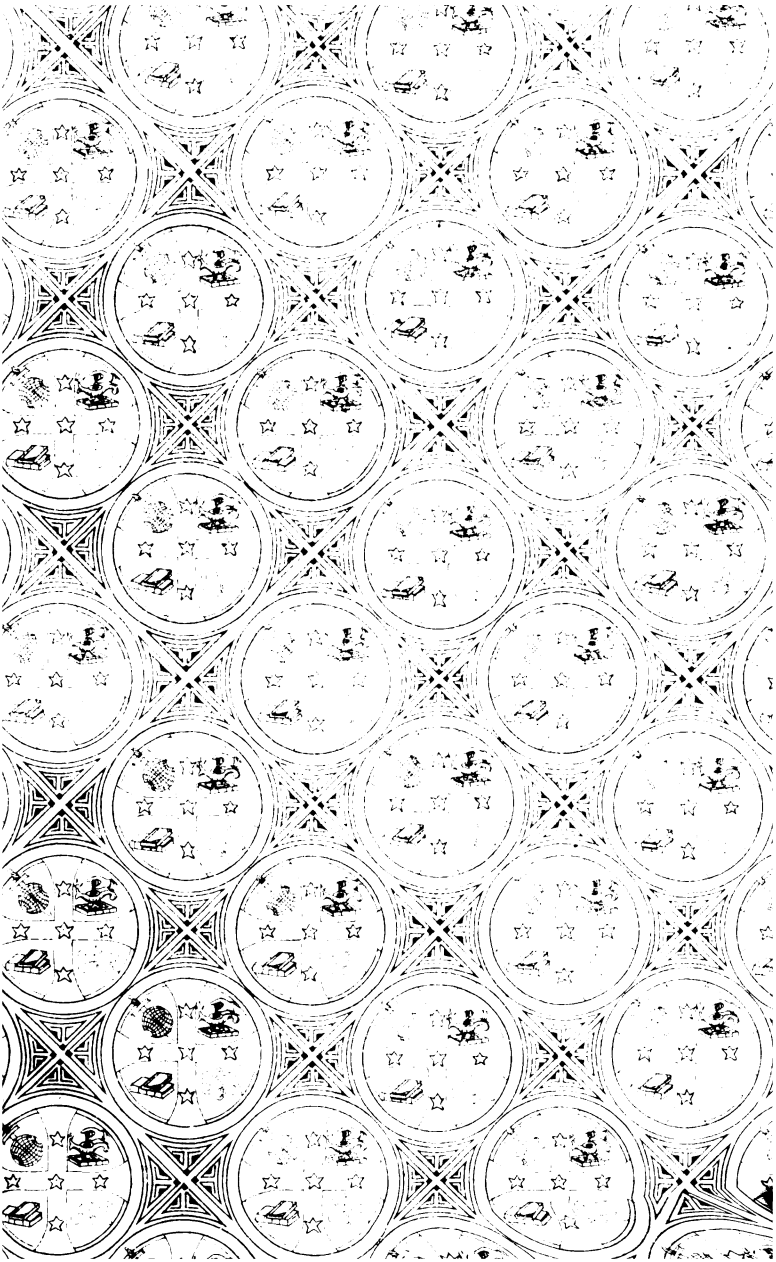
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

3433 07495006 8

MIXT SHADOW AND SHINE

Marcus Clarke





:2

'TWIXT SHADOW AND SHINE

'TWIXT SHADOW AND SHINE

BY

MARCUS CLARKE

AUTHOR OF "FOR THE TERM OF HIS NATURAL LIFE."

". . . . . When the wattle gold trembles
'Twixt shadow and shine;
When each dew-laden air draught resembles
A long draught of wine;
When the sky-line's blue burnished resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance,
Some song in all hearts hath existence:
Such songs have been mine."—*A. L. Gordon.*

Second Edition

(*First Edition: Melbourne*, 1875)

GEORGE ROBERTSON AND COMPANY

LONDON MELBOURNE SYDNEY

ADELAIDE BRISBANE

1893

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Printed in England by
RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
LONDON & BUNGAY.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

In which we visit Pencarrow 1

CHAPTER II.

In which we make the Acquaintance of Harry-my-Friend 21

CHAPTER III.

In which we sup at the Pilchard Inn ... 39

CHAPTER IV.

In which we find a white Mutton-Bird ... 70

CHAPTER V.

In which we become Partners in a Love Story 96

CHAPTER VI.

In which we become Members of the Native Companions 124

Leonard 11/8/54

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE
In which we go down a Coal-Mine ... 147

CHAPTER VIII.

In which we barely Escape with our Lives 160

CHAPTER IX.

In which we hear an Explanation from Gipsy George 170

CHAPTER X.

In which the Noble Captain takes the Chair 184

'TWIXT SHADOW AND SHINE.

"——When the wattle gold trembles
'Twixt shadow and shine;
When each dew-laden air draught resembles
A long draught of wine;
When the sky-line's blue burnished resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance;
Some song in all hearts hath existence:
Such songs have been mine."—A. L. GORDON.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH WE VISIT PENCARROW.

A GOLDEN afternoon in Australian spring; the air mild and balmy, the sky serene and cloudless. As she sat there on the cliff beneath the perfumed shade of the

blossoming wattle-boughs, she heard no sound save the chirrup of the grasshopper and the ripple of the tide as it rolled in caressingly among the rocks at her feet.

Below her was a picture, which, though she had looked at it daily for eighteen years, had not yet lost its power to charm. From where she sat she could see the whole panorama of Western Port Bay. Opposite to her lay the shining sea; on the left, separated only by a mile of translucent water, nestled the village of Newhaven, with Churchill Island lying alongside it like a floating fish; to the right was French Island, with Tortoise Head, rosy in the haze that hung over the Mainland—the Mainland, as the villagers called it; for the settlers at Pencarrow had scarcely yet learned to value the rich land at their backs, and cast eyes of respect upon the barren tract of country

which ran from Sandy Point to Hastings, and so, by Cobb's coach, through Frankston and Mordialloc, to mighty, much-talked-of Melbourne.

"I wonder what it is like," said Priscilla to herself, as she bent her dark eyes more steadily on the further shore. "A great town!—yet not like the towns in my books; not like London, or Paris, or Venice, or Rome. It has only been built forty years. When grandfather first came here, there was not a house, he says. The settlers used to land their sheep at Sandy Point, and drive them overland to the place where the great city is. I wonder what life is like there!"

It was not unnatural that she should wonder, for since the day of her birth on a stormy August night eighteen years ago, the grand-child of John Tregarthen—Captain Tregarthen as he was termed—had known

no other experience of life than that to be gathered in the drowsy existence of the township of Pencarrow. Turning her face from the sea, she looked down upon the village. There it lay almost on the sea-line, its white houses and wattle-bloomed huts making a speck of homely comfort amid the great desolation of the forest. Behind it to the right hand, as she turned, spread the summer countryland pierced now and then by blue smoke, or broken here and there by a farmhouse or a clearing. Beyond these evidences of neighbourly existence, the bush, hot with sunlight, heavy with moist airs, drowsy with strange odours, rolled on to the feet of the Hurdy Gurdy Mountains, and so around and beyond them into the illimitable and untravelled wilderness.

Her experience of life—what was it? The straggling street—if indeed the quaintly

grouped collection of huts could be called a street. The Pilchard Inn and General Store where Mrs. Meggot dispensed rum and tobacco to such of the fisher-folk as desired those stimulants. The blacksmith's cottage where Sandy McTaggart could be seen hammering at the same old plough-coulter that had made pretence of being in want of repair any time this ten years. The huge boulder-stones below the cliff where the boatmen were accustomed to land in bad weather. The jetty with its signal-pole and clumsy lamp-iron. The curved lines of brown nets upon the beach. The wooden school-house. The tiny police-cottage with the one mounted trooper who represented the Majesty of the Law for sixty miles round, admiring the only pair of boots that ever were blacked daily at Pencarrow. The blue sky above, the blue sea before, the blue hills behind and around.

The scent of wattle-blossoms and of the wild hop. The purple clusters of the sarsaparilla plant. The everlasting ripple of the sea. The gloom of the forest glades, the glory of the sunsets, and the white splendour of the moonlight;—the fact that she was eighteen years old and that it was spring. This was her experience of life.

Her thoughts, travelling back through the simple annals of her history, showed her nothing romantic—showed her scarcely anything worthy, as she thought, to remember. The little junketings and jollities at the scattered farms, when harvesting or apple-gathering brought the younger folks together. The excitement when, from the newly-opened coal-mine at Kilgunda, came holiday-makers to the village, and roused with their fierce city-born impatience of delay whatever drop of Romany blood tingled in the veins of the swarthy land-

lady of the Pilchard. The merry-makings at Christmas. The mournful meetings at funerals. The occasional sermon in the little wooden school-house. The rare trip across the bay to visit a newly-married school-friend daring enough to follow her husband to other fishing-grounds. This was all. Yet not quite all. There were other experiences familiar to her, which were denied to the dwellers in towns. Experiences of wild winters, of sudden storms, of hissing surf, of sinking boats and weeping women that would be widows ere the morn. Ah! the bay was calm enough now; but there at her feet was the shining spot where, sixteen years ago, her father's boat had sunk and left her an orphan to her childless grandfather!

Shuddering, she rose and commenced to retrace her steps to the town. Suddenly she stopped, for in the bush which bordered

the little track leading along the cliff she heard a voice singing—

> "Penn'd the temeskoe rye to the Romany chi,
> As the choon was dicking prey lende dui,
> 'Rinkeny tawni!
> Romany rawni!
> Mook man choom teero gudlo mui!'"[1]

For a moment a blush tinged her cheeks; for though she did not comprehend the words of the song, she knew the voice of the singer. It was George Meggot (or Gipsy George, as he was called), the son of the landlady of the Pilchard Inn.

Gipsy George was a mystery to the honest fisher-folk. When Meggot married the black-eyed woman with the brown baby at her back, the gossips had shaken

[1] "*Said the county's earl to the gipsy girl,*
As the moon was casting her silver shine,
'Brown little lady!
Romany lady!
Give me to kiss those sweet lips of thine!'"

their heads and predicted that no good would come of it. They were wrong, however, for Mrs. Meggot was a faithful wife and an excellent manager. Though of a fierce and passionate temper, she succeeded in retaining her husband's esteem until the day of his death; and if there was any story connected with her early life, Jack Meggot either never inquired into it, or was satisfied with the explanation given to him. By his wife's thrift he acquired some considerable property, and when he died he left her almost independent of fortune. She sold the boats, nets, and shares in the fisheries, and took the Pilchard Inn, which she ruled with a despotism tempered only by her son.

Gipsy George deserved his title. Tall, nervous, and agile, he was the best horseman, the best leaper, the best shot in Pencarrow. His black elf-curls, his curved

nose, his beardless olive face, his scarlet lips, white teeth, and eyes like live sloes, were subjects of admiration—not to say of something like terror—to all the girls in the country side. The Cornishmen and Scotchmen, who for the most part made up the population of the fisheries of Rhyll, Tyabb, and Pencarrow, did not affect his company. This was but little loss to him; for though he could hold his own in a boat with the best of them, he cared little for the enjoyments or dangers of the sea, and seemed never so happy as when galloping through the bush on the wildest colt he could procure, wandering with his gun among the mountains, or shutting himself up in his own room with the numerous birds and beasts which, from time to time, he captured and tamed; for Gipsy George had the *drav*, the power of mastery over the wild creatures of the woods, and was

never without some parrot, bear, cat, or magpie, which acknowledged him his sole and only master. His mother never interfered with him, she supplied him with money for his expeditions and gave him the best when he returned. All that she had was at his disposal, and she suffered him to turn her house into a menagerie without a murmur.

Still crooning his song he came presently out upon the road. Truly a strange wild figure enough—white trousers belted with a digger's scarlet sash—a check shirt open at the neck and having its collar confined by a bright yellow handkerchief—a jacket or shooting-coat of green velveteen worn white at the elbows and seams, but still of a fashion and quality otherwise unknown at Pencarrow—an opossum-skin cap surmounting his rich reckless face, and on the top of the cap perched a huge white

cockatoo, which so soon as it caught sight of Priscilla erected its yellow crest, opened its great wings as though helmeting its master, and uttered a succession of harsh and warning screams.

"*Chee, chee!*" cried George Meggot, stretching up a brown hand heavy with two great gold rings and imprisoning the bird. "Be quiet! Do you not see who it is?" and taking off his cap he bowed to Priscilla with easy grace. "Good-morning, Miss Priscilla."

"Good-morning, George," said Priscilla uneasily as he turned to walk after her—"I thought that you were away in Gipps Land."

"I've been at the Coal-mines," said he, "working,—for a wonder."

"Not helping the men, George?" asked she with surprise.

"No," he laughed; "not quite that yet.

Breaking horses for them. There were some Melbourne folks coming down, and the manager wanted to drive them about a bit."

"When are they coming?" asked Priscilla.

"They have come long ago," said Gipsy George. "They are going away to-morrow. Mr. Hardy, that's the principal owner, wants to get back to town by next week."

"Nice people?" asked Priscilla.

Gipsy George laughed again. "They are all half-cracked, I think," said he. "Hardy is well enough, but the others! such a funny lot I never came across before—what with singing, and wrestling, and dancing, and quoting poetry, I thought they would have driven Scotch Jock out of his senses." And as he thought of how sober Mr. McAlister had stared at the pranks of Mr. Hardy's friends, he laughed until the cockatoo screamed again.

"Singing and wrestling?" said Priscilla. "I did not think that merchants did that sort of thing."

"Merchants!—No, I don't think merchants would do that sort of thing. But these fellows are not merchants, they're Mr. Hardy's friends! Ha, ha! I never saw such fellows. There's one of them, a tall chap in spectacles who says he's a what do you call it—knows about land, you know?"

"Surveyor?" suggested Priscilla.

"No, not a surveyor, a fellow who goes about with a hammer and——"

"Oh, a geologist?"

"That's it. Well, he does nothing but invite people to wrestle with him. He threw all the men at the works the first night he was there; and he threw me after a day or two. Then there's a lawyer chap. *He's* quite mad."

"What does *he* do?"

"Plays on the flute and argues with everybody. He told Jock that he knew nothing about coal-mining whatever; and when Jock began to get hot, he said to him that his pronunciation of Scotch was all wrong, and that he could speak it better himself. Ho! ho! ho! I thought the old man would have choked with rage!"

"And the others?"

"Oh, there's one—a Mr. Corboy—though they call him all sorts of nicknames. He is a Man of Genius, he says, and is always inventing things. I heard him tell Jock that he was just on the eve of discovering something that would supplant coal altogether! Fancy telling that to the manager of a coal-mine, and expecting him to congratulate you! But it is very likely that you'll see them, Miss Priscilla, for they spoke of calling here and going across to Phillip Island. If they do, of course the

Captain will ask Mr. Hardy up to the house."

Priscilla's heart began to beat quite unnecessarily. She saw a vision of a handsome stranger being entertained in her grandfather's parlour, and of herself, in her new muslin dress, playing the hostess.

"You said that Mr. Hardy was an old gentleman, did you not, George?" she asked with an assumption of indifference.

Gipsy George looked at her askance with his keen, black eyes.

"Mr. Hardy's thirty, I dare say," said he. "Too old for *you*, Miss Priscilla."

"George Meggot!" cried Priscilla, her friendly manner changing, "how often have I told you not to speak to me in that way. I shall go on alone."

"I beg your pardon," said George Meggot, in something like a bitter tone. "I am always offending you now, it seems. You

didn't mind what I used to say when I taught you how to find where the bush flowers grew, and where the parrots bred, and how to make your pony come at your call. You have forgotten that, I suppose."

She smiled.

"No, George, I have not forgotten. But we were boy and girl then. Besides, remember, I taught you something in return: I taught you how to read and write, and lent you my books, and told you about the world outside this little place."

"The world!" said George Meggot. "Ay, I must go out and see it. I cannot rest in one place, Priscilla; I am Romany, you know. The Gipsy must wander."

He spoke with so much of real sadness in his tone that Priscilla did not rebuke the familiar usage of her name.

"It is very natural to wish for change,"

said she. "I often have a longing to get away out of this place; I feel suffocated sometimes by these mountains, and blinded into stupidity by this ever-spreading sea."

Gipsy George looked at her again as she walked beside him with bent head and loosely-folded hands. For a moment he seemed as though he was about to take her in his arms and tell her of the jealous love for her which had gradually grown up in him. But he did not do so.

"That is not what I mean," said he. "When you leave here, you will find some place where you will make your home, and where you will be content to live and die. As my mother says, the *tatchi Romany* must keep roaming: the true Gipsy will never settle. You are not of the blood; you cannot understand this feeling."

"But your mother has lived here a long time, George," she said, without seeming to

notice the reproachful regret conveyed in his last words.

"My mother hates her life. She is a Camlo, a Lovel—one of the Kaulo Camloes, the Dark Comely-ones of England. She only stays for my sake, that she may make me rich. I wish," he added passionately, "that she would go to-morrow, to-day, *now*. I am rich enough."

"Hush, dear George, you must not blame her. I do not know the habits of your people, and you once told me that you were forbidden to speak of them to strangers. Your mother only lives for your happiness. You should try to make her happy in your turn."

"You are right, Miss Priscilla," cried the lad, with sudden enforced change of tone. "I will try. Forgive me for having vexed you, and think no more of what I said. See," he added, pointing down the rocks,

"there is your father's partner coming to fetch you." And, touching her hand with his lips, with so much of native grace that it rendered the action a homage rather than a caress, he caught the pendant branch of a tree, and swung himself across a chasm in the cliff into the thicket beyond. The cockatoo, with claws stuck for dear life into the fur cap, was carried, fluttering, with him, screaming in mid-air like some tortured demon.

Priscilla looked in the direction to which he had pointed, and saw coming to meet her the stalwart figure of her father's partner, Harry Ragner, or, as every man, woman, and child in the district of Western Port called him, Harry-my-Friend.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH WE MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF HARRY-MY-FRIEND.

A GREATER contrast to the dazzling, impetuous gipsy-boy could not well be imagined. Henry Ragner was a man of at least thirty-seven years of age. His Norse descent was plainly visible in his fair beard, his blue eyes, his tall and powerful form. He was dressed in a clumsy suit of pilot cloth, and wore sea-boots and a tarpaulin hat. His big hands — red rather than brown—were ornamented with no rings, but bore, instead, visible marks of hard work, in the shape of rags twisted round

bruised fingers, and secured with cotton. Nevertheless, as he lifted his hat to allow the breeze to cool his forehead, his brow showed white and pure; while, as for the heart that beat beneath that coarse shirt and shaggy coat, all Pencarrow knew it to be true as a dog's and tender as a woman's. So great a favourite was he, so staunch a comrade, so sensible an adviser, so beloved by little children, so generally recognized by each creature in the village as being, next to Heaven, a safe refuge and ever-present help in trouble, that, by some unspoken but universal consent, the name his father had given him had become merged in the quality of his own character, and he was known only as Harry-my-Friend.

His popularity was the reason why no one envied the good fortune that had recently befallen him in being made the

partner of the richest man in Pencarrow—Captain Tregarthen. This good fortune was the more pleasant to contemplate because it came entirely unsought, and was brought about solely by Harry-my-Friend's unselfish kindliness. He had been long known to the Captain. For seventeen years Harry-my-Friend had been a resident in the village, and earned his bread by fishing. He had come there a mere lad soon after the first settlement of the place, and was the comrade of young Tregarthen, then but one year a widower, when the fatal storm occurred which left Priscilla an orphan. From that wreck he only had escaped, escaped with the loss of his whole property, which was nothing more than a seventh share in the little craft. The Captain, sorrowing for his lost son, had lent his son's comrade enough money to buy himself a share in another boat, and that

money had been promptly repaid. When in his turn the Captain stood in need of aid, by reason of sickness, Harry-my-Friend had not only placed his own small savings in his benefactor's hands, but he had taken his benefactor's place and gone fishing in his stead. When good times came and the little nooks of land which the Captain had secured here and there at Phillip Island and along the coast increased in value, Harry-my-Friend was selected to look after the Captain's interest at sea. Gradually there sprung up between the two men, despite their difference of age, a firm friendship and confidence. As the value of the Captain's farm rose, and as he himself grew older, he left the management of his interests in the fisheries entirely to Harry, and perhaps no one, except the honest fellow himself, was astonished when the old man had decided upon taking Harry-my-

Friend into partnership and to retire from active work altogether.

"I am getting old, my lad," he said; "I shall be sixty-five next birthday, and though still strong and hearty, I don't feel the man I did sixteen years ago, when poor Jack was lost. Besides, my little Priss is growing a woman and will be settling in life."

To which Harry-my-Friend made answer in a grave and serious way, that for a long while he had only thought of Captain Tregarthen's interests, and would try to do his best to aid him in all his projects.

"The chief business of my life," said the Captain, "is to look after Priscilla's happiness. I should not be long for this world did any harm happen to her."

"I will do my best to see that no harm does happen to her," said Harry-my-Friend more seriously than ever, and so they

grasped hands as men who understood each other.

Perhaps it was in accordance with this promise that Harry-my-Friend was now coming to escort Priscilla home.

"You are late, are you not, Priss?" he asked, as the girl came running up to him and offered him her cheek to kiss.

"It is not sun-down yet," she said. "But I stopped talking with George Meggot."

Harry-my-Friend's face clouded.

"I don't like that lad," he said; "and the Captain doesn't like him either, Priscilla."

"Priscilla!" cried she. "Why *Priscilla?* You are getting very distant, Harry, since you have become Grandy's partner!"

"Really, I hope not," said Harry-my-Friend; but his white brow grew darker

under the tarpaulin as he spoke. "I do not mean to be anything but kind; but——"

"But what? I'm sure there's no real harm in George, and we have been together since we were children."

"But you are not a child now, Priscilla, and Gipsy George is no fit companion for a young woman."

Priscilla tossed her head; but the memory of her own words to her old playfellow made her blush, despite herself.

"I am only eighteen," said she. "How old are you, Harry?"

"I am nearly thirty-eight," said he.

"Oh, well, you have a right to lecture me, for you are old enough to be my father!"

"I only speak for your good, Miss Priscilla," he returned softly, but without looking at her. "I thought only of your good, believe me."

"*Miss Priscilla!* At last, then! Why, Harry-my-Friend! Dear old Harry! What have I said to offend you?"

She put both her hands up to his arm and clung to him.

"I am a wayward girl," she went on, with real regret in her voice. "I did not mean what I said. I will not see George Meggot any more if you don't wish it. Dear old Harry, kiss me!" She held up her girlish lips as she spoke, but he stooped his great honest head and kissed her brow merely.

"That I should quarrel with *you*, Harry-my-Friend—you who have known me since I was a baby!"

"Yes, that is just it," said Harry-my-Friend, in his slow serious way. "That is just it, Prissy dear. You must not forget that." And then holding her by the hand as if she was in truth his daughter, he led her towards her grandfather's house,

The cottage of Mr. Tregarthen was situated about half-a-mile from the village. It stood in a little valley formed by the dip of two of the great cliffs. Built of wood, it was nevertheless comfortable as well as picturesque. A fence enclosed about three acres of garden and orchard. A well-grassed paddock through which a little creek ran to the bay, lay at the back of the garden, and the visitor who followed this creek towards its source became soon conscious of a murmuring sound, and was pleasantly surprised on turning a boulder overgrown with English creepers to find himself confronted by a miniature torrent—Priscilla's Waterfall, spouting from out the cliff. The cottage itself was roomy and cheerful, and consisted of five rooms on one floor, surrounded on all sides by a broad verandah. The front faced the sea, and at the bottom of Priscilla's Rose-garden was a

strip of golden sand. A little jetty ran out on one side, along which was moored Priscilla's Pleasure Skiff. Everything spoke of the old man's love for his child. Not an object there but which had been selected to give her pleasure, not a tree or flower but which had been planted to do her honour.

As they reached the little wicket Mr. Tregarthen himself came to meet them.

He was a powerful old man, of a carriage upright beyond his years, and a bearing beyond his apparent station. Originally the owner of a small trading vessel, he had acquired the air of authority which a habit of command gives, and in his retirement enriched a mind naturally active by a course of diligent if not very extensive reading.

"Prissy, my dear, have you heard the news?"

"No, Grandy!"

"There are visitors coming!"

"Here, Grandy?"

"Well, to the township, and I suppose we must make them welcome here."

"Oh! Mr. Hardy and his friends! How nice!"

"You have heard of them?"

Priscilla related as much of her interview with Gipsy George as might explain her knowledge.

Tregarthen frowned, but Harry-my-Friend, quietly interposing, affirmed that the meeting with young Meggot was a pure accident, and that the lad had but just returned from Kilgunda.

"I will not have him here," said the Captain, clapping his brown hand on the top rail of the wicket. "I bear the boy no ill-will because of his Gipsy blood. His mother is an honest woman enough: but he

is a scamp and a vagabond. Dost hear me, Priscilla?"

"Poor George," said Priscilla, "he has no friends to take his part. I don't think that he is so bad as you would make him out to be."

She spoke without warmth, almost without interest, her eyes directed the while to the little township which, lying across the curve of the bay, was growing rapidly indistinct in the gathering gloom.

Tregarthen watched her narrowly, and then turned with something as of relief in his face to his partner. "Come, Prissy deary," he said, "get the lantern. It is time to light up."

Priscilla moved away and returned presently with an old ship's lantern of antique fashion, yet well preserved and polished. This she lit and trimmed, and handed it to her grandfather. Tregarthen

took it, and marched gravely to the centre window facing the sea. There stood a sort of wire case erected upon a frame-work, and into this he put the lamp. The others followed as if engaged in the performance of a well-understood and frequent duty.

The lantern duly fixed, the Captain and his partner removed their hats, and all three knelt down in the circle of light thrown by the beacon. "O God of Power and of Mercy, aid and have pity on all souls at sea!" said the Captain. And then rising, the three reverently withdrew, leaving the light to cast its shaft of warning over the fatal rock where the Captain's only son had met his sudden death. The household of John Tregarthen had witnessed this sacred ceremony every night for sixteen years. The memorial lantern had become a part of Pencarrow.

As they returned to the other part of the

house, Priscilla drew her grandfather's attention to an unusual sight in the valley. A triangle of lights was approaching with great rapidity, while, mingling with the wash of water, came the unwonted noise of wheels.

"It is Mr. Hardy and his friends," said Harry-my-Friend. "They have taken the old coach that used to run to the Point, and have got horses from the Mines."

As he spoke, a faint tootle-tooing rose and interpenetrated the still air.

Priscilla laughed merrily. "That must be the quarrelsome lawyer with his flute," said she. "Oh, Grandy, ask them all up here. It will be such fun!"

"I do not know about asking *all* of them," returned the Captain. "I've written a note to Mr. Hardy, if Harry will take it down."

Priscilla was uneasy the whole evening,

and made weariness an excuse for getting away to her own room to think of the coming delight of fresh faces.

The Captain was uneasy, too; for after several pipes, and as many ineffectual attempts to get the conversation into the comfortable groove of farming or fishery, he said—

"Harry-my-Friend, I want to speak to you about something which I've had in my mind for a long time. I have been calculating to-day that I can give Priscilla £3000 for her fortune."

"It's a large sum, sir," says Harry-my-Friend, puffing at his pipe steadily.

"It should serve to keep a man out of peril of life or limb?" says the Captain.

"It should indeed, sir."

"I should be sorry to think that my girl should ever marry against my wishes," says the Captain, after an impatient pause.

"It would be a great misfortune," says Harry-my-Friend, still puffing.

"I should die happy if I knew her the wife of an honest man, who loved her and could protect her," says the Captain.

Harry-my-Friend found the smoke going the wrong way suddenly, so he ceased smoking and, turning round, occupied himself in vigorously knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

"I shouldn't care for a gentleman," continues the Captain, staring at his partner's broad back, "nor for a young man. I should prefer a sensible, steady, warm-hearted fellow. Nor would I look for him to be rich, or in high wordly position. A sailor would suit me, for instance. But you are not listening."

"Oh yes!—yes, I am!" says the other, still engaged, with his back to his interlocutor. "But this pipe! I can't quite——"

"Harry-my-Friend," said Mr. Tregarthen, suddenly, "I wonder *you* never thought of getting married."

Harry-my-Friend turns round all crimson with the exertion of disembowelling his pipe, and presents a face of blank astonishment to his patron.

"You ought to settle in life, you know. You're a Partner, Harry-my-Friend, a Partner in a good business. Think it over now, think it over!" and with this the Captain departs, and getting to his own room (after listening awhile at Prissy's door to be sure that she safely slumbers) he produces from a locker a bottle of Schiedam and a liqueur glass. Having filled the same, he looks through one wall at his sleeping grand-daughter, and through the other at his bewildered partner, and then solemnly drinks a silent toast which appears to give him enormous satisfaction.

As for Harry-my-Friend, he gets his pipe under weigh with all speed, and sits smoking amazedly, until bethinking him of the invitation to Mr. Hardy, he takes it from the little mantelpiece and sallies out into the starlight night. "I'll see what he's like," says he to himself.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH WE SUP AT THE PILCHARD INN.

To say that Mr. Julius Hardy and his friends astonished Pencarrow is to give but a feeble notion of the effect produced upon the township by their arrival and conduct.

In the first place, it appeared that the operation of driving had been performed by one Patrick O'Gorman, a young Irishman of considerable size and weight. Mr. O'Gorman—known familiarly as Patsy—had devoted himself to the practice of athletic sports from early childhood, and was considered by some of his immediate friends and admirers to be a trifle superior to Heenan in physique and daring. A

native of the colony, and educated at one of the largest of the city schools, he was not without some considerable opinion of himself. His bedroom was decorated with photographs of 'The Cestus Players,' and 'The Dying Gladiator,' while a woodcut of Gerome's '*Pollice Verso*' was cut from an illustrated paper and pinned at his bed's foot. When you visited Mr. O'Gorman in his chamber, he would point to these works of art and say—after a scornful glance at your chest and biceps:—"Those were *men*, my boy! Not like us puny creatures. Bah! I begin to lose faith in my manhood! Sit down. Spinner and I walked forty miles yesterday. By Ajax, a glorious walk!"

Spinner was the gigantic O'Gorman's bosom friend, and weighed probably six stone four lbs. Nevertheless, Spinner also was an athlete in his way, a champion

among light-weights, a tree-climber, a desperate fellow with ropes and a ladder. The pair would sometimes depart on secret expeditions to Mount Macedon or Mount Juliet, and on their return, O'Gorman, in relating their deeds of gymnastic daring, would always end by mysteriously sinking his voice, and saying, "But you should have seen Spinner! Spinner, sir, was Immense!"

The result of the gladiatorial driving of Mr. O'Gorman had been the breakage of a spring, which Corboy, the engineer, had repaired with the braces of Churchill, the wrestling geologist. Corboy was an indifferent copy of the Chandos bust of Shakespeare. He had an enormous head, within which his inventive brain was perpetually working. "I am a Man of Genius," he was accustomed to say. "It is impossible but that this teeming brain will

not bring forth something which the world shall learn to value. In the meantime let us Super-elevate the Outer Rail, and thus, by a principle of engineering, prevent the Railway Train of Mind, when following the sharp Curves of Invention, from flying off into everlasting smash!" Upon which the super-elevation of the outer rail was accomplished with brandy.

Corboy once started a theory on the subject of Diamond-making which fascinated his friends for six weeks. The diamonds were to be produced by electricity, and to be deposited like pearls, so to speak, around the nucleus of a centre diamond, procured for that purpose. Mr. Scrimminger, who was always open to the committal of a folly, aided and abetted Corboy in this scheme; and the grand experiment was made with a bread-pan, an electrophorous, and a coil of wire, in the backyard of Hardy's lodgings.

As the diamond market, however, experienced no convulsion consequent upon a sudden influx of gems, and as both Scrimminger and Corboy preserved an ominous—not to say gloomy—silence on the subject, it is reasonable to conclude that the experiment was a failure.

Scrimminger—Thomas Turnover Scrimminger—T. T. Scrimminger—T. T. S.—and Your Father—was a tall, thin, whiskerless man. He was an inventor likewise, and his invention was called the Penny Peepshow. The Penny Peepshow was a comic periodical, in which the illustrations and letterpress were to be simultaneously produced by a secret process of his own. What this process exactly was no one knew. Scrimminger dropped from time to time dark hints about gelatine, photography, and plaster of Paris. It was believed that the process was not *quite* perfected yet; but it

was so close to the point of perfection that Scrimminger was necessitated to carry about with him, on all occasions, a bundle of papers, proof-sheets, and slips of gelatine. With this bundle tucked under one arm and a thick stick under the other, T. T. Scrimminger defied fate. "Wait till I get the Penny Peepshow, my boy!" he was accustomed to say. "*Then* we'll set matters right!" Did one talk of debts, loves, quarrels, or ill fortune, Scrimminger slapped his preposterous bundle, and crying, with empty pipe protruded, "Give Your Father some tobacco!" clinched all arguments, and banished all misfortune, by his triumphant "Ha! ha! Wait till I get the Penny Peepshow!"

But the crown and glory of the coach-load of visitors was Mr. Jeremy Jerke. Mr. Jeremy Jerke — he usually ignored his Christian name and signed himself briefly

Jerke, as though he had been a duke—was a barrister. It was said that he had been intended for the Church; but that having duly weighed the respective values of the position of the Bishop of Melbourne and the Chief-Justice of Victoria, he had decided upon qualifying for the latter office. Mr. Jerke was a brisk person of the middle height. Naturally somewhat nervous, he endeavoured to hide his embarrassment by a reckless affectation of abrupt freedom of manner. To those who met him for the first time, this abruptness was startling; but Jeremy Jerke was such an amusing, and withal so good-hearted a fellow, that they soon submitted to his eccentricity, and possibly liked him all the better for it. He was the legal adviser to the Kilgunda Coal Mining Company (Limited), and had accompanied Hardy — whose fortune was committed to the success of the venture—on

this visit of inspection. Jeremy Jerke had one failing—omniscience. He knew everything.

So soon as the coach stopped, which it did in a sort of chariot-racing manner, under the guidance of the athletic O'Gorman, Julius Hardy swung himself to earth, and entered the Pilchard Inn.

He was a young man of six-and-twenty, dressed in grey clothes of a fashionable cut, and having in his manner and bearing that defiant listlessness which is the product of a certain kind of London training. The fact was that Julius Hardy was just beginning to find out that life meant something else besides pleasure-seeking, and that, having ruined himself in the old country, he had need to put shoulder to the wheel to retrieve his fortune in a new one. In truth, he was a common specimen of a very common class. The son of an English clergyman, educated

at Rugby and Oxford, he had just escaped utter destruction by emigration to Australia. The voyage gave him leisure to reflect on his follies. He presented his introductions, and asked for work. The Kilgunda Mine made him its secretary, and, being clever, good-humoured, and, withal, a gentleman at bottom, he was received with cordiality by the circle of young Victorians to whom the eccentric Jerke introduced him. A year back a timely legacy enabled him to exchange the position of secretary for that of principal shareholder, and he now hoped that fortune was about to reward his reformation by a fair start in life.

Mrs. Meggot was standing inside the doorway when the vehicle stopped to the dulcet sounds of "Erin-go-bragh" from Mr. Jerke's flute.

"We want beds, and something to eat," said Hardy.

"You can have something to eat," said Mrs. Meggot; "but I fear we haven't beds for all of you."

"Oh, well, you can put us up somewhere," said Hardy—"anywhere; we are not particular. We're going across to Phillip Island to-morrow."

"I'll do my best, sir," returned the landlady, "but——"

Mr. Jerke interrupted her.

"Hallo!" he said. "What's that? Eh! Now, ma'am, have you any statement to make?"

"I was telling the gentleman that the beds——"

"The beds! Good! What about the beds? Are they hard, soft, long, short? What's the matter with the beds?"

"The gentleman was saying," continued Mistress Meggot, "that——"

"Now, never mind what the gentleman

was saying," cries Jerke, waving his flute as though it had been a roll of papers. "You offered an observation about beds. If you have a statement to make,—make it!"

"She says that she hasn't enough accommodation," says Hardy, laughing.

"Accommodation, eh! *Accommodo*, I accommodate, verb active, *to supply with conveniences of any kind.*—Johnson. Good. Proceed."

"If you like to put up with a pair of blankets and a sofa," says Mistress Meggot, her black eyes twinkling, "I will try and make you comfortable."

"To be sure you will. Consider the subject of accommodation as exhausted. It is too early yet to talk of beds. Beds will enter more readily into the composition of time and place in three hours hence, and in another apartment. Now, what stimulants do you possess?"

"Stimulants, sir?"

"Brandy, whisky, rum, gin, porter, sherry, champagne, two ales, or colonial wine. *Stimulo, stimulare*"—Mr. Jerke pronounced the infinitive mood *stimularrey* in proper Australian fashion—"*to prick with a goad.* I want my stomach pricked with a goad. I want to be stimulated."

"I have some very good rum," says Mistress Meggot, "and some brandy."

"The Bull Brand?" asks Mr. Jerke.

"I really don't know, sir. It's Hennessy's brandy, I think."

"No," says Mr. Jerke, with decision. "I never drink anything but Bull brandy." He was standing counsel of the firm which imported that luxury, and gallantly advertised his friends on all occasions. "The rum is palatable?"

"It is considered very good rum, sir."

"Produce it!" is Mr. Jerke's brief command.

The O'Gorman enters, followed by the rest of the party.

"What cheer, brave hearts?" cries the Athlete. "Is food prepared? I am hungry!"—and he falls to expanding his manly chest, stretching his muscular arms, and delivering tremendous blows at nothing with infinite precision.

"Your Father is peckish likewise," says Scrimminger, setting his bundle down, and laying his stick across it sword-fashion.

"My Outer Rail is confoundedly low," says Corboy. "I must super-elevate or rush into space."

Mistress Meggot entering with the rum is received with applause.

"Gentlemen," says Scrimminger, "T. T. takes this opportunity of soliciting further favours, and begs to couple with the

remark the name of our excellent landlady."

As all glasses were raised to do justice to this toast, a tremendous shuffling was heard outside, and presently a body in a blue woollen jacket was projected into the room as though discharged from a catapult. This appearance was quickly followed by a tall man in a long-tailed coat. The new-comer stretched out a bony hand, clutched a glass, and twitching off his spectacles, said—"A fair back-fall, gentlemen, I give you my honour!"

It was Churchill, the wrestling geologist.

"Have a drink, my fine fellow," said he to his antagonist, a soft-headed fisherman who had been deluded into trying the "best out of three. "You did well, but the Anglo-Saxon, sir, is triumphant. The British Workman never yet was beat!"

"Mrs. Meggot," said Julius Hardy, "I am afraid we alarm you."

"Not a bit," returned she. "I've ten rashers and a dozen eggs on the fire, and supper shall be on the table in ten minutes."

"By the great god Pan!" cries O'Gorman, "we only want Spinner here now!"

But the irrepressible Jerke was not to be put off in this way.

"Eggs!" he cries. "Eggs! Perish the thought! I want fish, I came here for fish, and fish I must have. Produce your fish, ma'am."

"I fear that all the fish has gone to Melbourne," says Mrs. Meggot, with an ominous snapping of her black eyes. "You came without warning, gentlemen, and you must take what we can give you."

"Certainly," returns Hardy. "By all means. Eggs and bacon are excellent."

"Proposition granted," interjects Mr.

Jerke; "but I want *fish.* My brain demands phosphorus. Throw phosphorus into the stomach, and the brain lights up. Take phosphorus out of the stomach, ma'am, and the brain, like a smouldering ember, dies on the hearth of the cerebrum!"

"Indeed, sir!" says Mistress Meggot. "Well, I've just nothing but ham and eggs. You may think it strange, but we don't eat fish here if we've anything else."

"Jerke," says Churchill, "you are a nuisance. My dear lady, send in the ham and eggs."

"Being sat upon," returns Mr. Jerke, "I withdraw from the discussion."

So the ham and eggs were duly brought, and as duly eaten, Mr. Jerke, despite his complaints, swallowing his meal with avidity.

"And now," says Jerke, having cleared his plate, "now, the composition of time

and place being concurrent—for bed! What about beds, ma'am?"

"Well, you see," said Mrs. Meggot, "I am rather put about just now. My biggest bedroom is occupied. In fact we—we have a stranger in the house."

"A stranger!" cries Corboy. "Then, as a stranger, give it welcome! By two-headed Janus, Nature has made strange fellows in her time!"

"And this is a boy!" said Hardy, who, having finished his supper, had been interrogating the inn folk.

"A boy!"

"A bouncing boy! Born three days ago, and the son of the honest fellow in the blue jacket, with whom Churchill so successfully engaged in combat."

"A new-born infant," cries Jerke. "Let me see him. I want to test a theory. The Australian Hare and the Australian

Baby are convertible terms. Each weighs from six to seven pounds avoirdupois in England, and each from seven to eight pounds avoirdupois in Australia. Mrs. Meggot, produce your stranger!"

Mistress Meggot, whose shrewd head had long ago estimated the quality of the eccentricities of the party and apportioned its proper value in the bill, shook her head with a smile.

"The baby is safe in bed," says she, "and his mother too; but you can see his father if you like, gentlemen."

"Oh, confiscate his father to the general revenue," cries Scrimminger, lighting his pipe. "Who wants to see his father?"

"And yet a father," says Churchill, sententiously adjusting his spectacles, "plays no unimportant part in the production of a British Workman. I am prepared to interview the father. In the interests of the

British Workman, gentlemen, I say—let the father be produced."

"Good!" explodes Jerke. "Produce the father!"

A titter of suppressed laughter, and the stalwart young fisherman stood revealed. He looked unutterably foolish, and hung his head as though he had committed a crime instead of having begotten a citizen.

"Name!" says Mr. Jerke, severely.

"Bickley," replies the fisherman, grinning in an apologetic manner.

"Bickley! Ah—*Beck*, a brook—and *ley*, a pasture. Sussex, I opine?"

"Ay, that's my native, surely."

"And the *femme couverte*—the woman Bickley—your wife, in fact?"

"The missus was borned at Telscombe, sir, and a nottable 'ooman she be."

"Do you know what you've been doing, Bickley?"

"Not very justly I doän't, but I'se be a stupe, and was anywhen," returns the unhappy Bickley, twisting his hat in his great hands, and staring round the circle.

"Well, you've become the parent of a free and independent elector for the county of Mornington, sir. I hope you realize your responsibility."

"Well, lookee, I doän't, like," says Bickley, in a half-whisper.

"I thought not. Pray, what's the boy like? No equivocation, Bickley. What's he like?"

"They saäy he has the bly of his father 'bout un," says the proud parent, grinning more than ever. "But I misagree to that, though you caän't talk bruff to a sockling 'ooman. Hadn't I abeen so stived up in my place, I'd ha' see 'em all danneld afore I'd ha' jaunced here for her mothering."

"Come, my man!" cries good-natured

Scrimminger, "fill up and drink to the wife and wean!"

Bickley obeyed, to be checked by Mr. Jerke in the middle of his deglutition with an abrupt "First child, my man?" and to be compelled to chokingly intimate that it was.

"His first child, and a boy!—A boy lawfully begotten according to the statute in that case made and provided! Why the fellow doesn't know the value of his property. My excellent friend, do you know the importance of that infant?"

"I bean't well avised, sir!" says Bickley, churning the remainder of his liquor round and round in his glass, and gazing into the little whirlpool thus formed as though he had lost an argosy there.

"My good Bickley, he is your heir!—your heir-at-law, Bickley."

"True, sir," returns Bickley, coming out of his tumbler. "I do beleave he be."

"But that is not all, Bickley," continues Mr. Jerke, with the air of a man who is not going to let an offender off so easily. "He is not only your heir-at-law, but he's your heir male, your heir presumptive, your heir apparent, your heir of line, your special heir, your heir in borough-English, your copyhold heir, your heir in ancient demesne, and your heir in gavel-kind, Bickley."

"Deary, bless me!" says Bickley. "But that's hem ingurious!"

"Now, if you were in England, Bickley, this boy being your heir in borough-English, and you having no other children, would as youngest son inherit your realty did you die an intestate widower."

"I've never yet bin chastized in doing ought to make me die detested," says Bickley warmly.

"Intestate, Bickley,—without a will. *In*

the privative, and *testarri* to make a will and testament. But to resume. The infant in the next apartment, being your heir in gavel-kind, will have the privilege of succeeding to your lands without hindrance should you ever be executed for felony, which, I trust for your own sake, and public morality in general, you never will be."

"I hope not, sir," said Bickley.

"There is one privilege, however, which the infant in the adjoining apartment possesses by right of his birth, Bickley, which may be held by you to be a disadvantage, counterbalancing in effect the privilege of non-escheatment. An heir in gavel-kind may, at fifteen years of age, make a contract, and sell his estate for money."

"Ay, ay!" says Bickley, "that 'ud be a hem set out, surelye!"

"*Only*, Bickley, he must make the livery upon the feoffment (the only deed which can be adopted) in person; for, being a minor, he cannot by common law appoint an attorney. You have him there, Bickley! Ha! ha! You have him there!"

"I doän't justly——" Bickley was beginning, but Jeremy Jerke, who had exhausted his knowledge of everything under the word *heir* to be found in the dictionary of jurisprudence, cut him short remorselessly, and with a manner which implied that Bickley had sent for *him*, and not he for Bickley.

"Can't explain further now, my friend. See you some other time. Stimulate your nervous centres again, and depart!"

"Good-night, sweet Bickley," says Corboy, one of whose many ingenuities was the translation of poetry into a rhythmic

prose of his own. "A fair good-night! and let thy ravelled sleeve of care be knit by gentle sleep. Adieu, most exquisite Bickley!"

"Come, gentlemen," says Churchill, "Scrimminger shall sing us 'The Lowlands of Holland.' Silence for Mr. Scrimminger's song!"

Scrimminger had a sweet voice and considerable taste, was ever ready to display both, and, in a few moments, was warbling like a blackbird. When he came to the verse in which the lady says—

> "My love has built another ship,
> And set her to the main;
> He had but twenty mariners,
> And all to bring her hame:
> The stormy winds did war again,
> The raging waves did shout,
> And my love and his bonnie ship
> Turned widdershins about"——

the door opened gently, and in came Harry-

my-Friend. With the instinctive good breeding of gentle nature, he held up his hand with a deprecatory bow to the singing Scrimminger and remained standing until the conclusion of the song, and the applause which followed it. Then he held out Tregarthen's letter.

"I beg your pardon for intruding, gentlemen," said he, "but I promised to give this letter to Mr. Hardy to-night."

"I am Mr. Hardy. What is it?"

"An invitation from Captain Tregarthen. I am the Captain's partner. My name is Henry Ragner."

"Descended probably from Ragner Lodbrog, the Dane," interrupted Mr. Jerke. "Ain't you the man they call Harry-my-Friend?"

"I am," said Harry-my-Friend, with his grave smile. "We have a fashion of naming people down here."

"A very excellent fashion, and a very excellent name," says Julius Hardy in his genial way. "I hope none of us will ever have reason to call you anything else. Shake hands, Harry-my-Friend, and sit down."

Ragner obeyed, and as he did so, eyed Mr. Hardy with keen though quiet curiosity. He saw the graceful though well-knit figure, the bright eyes and broad white brow, and felt the unconscious air of superiority which surrounded the young man, and breathed in every turn of his head, and every tone of his voice. As he released the small hand which returned the clasp of his own huge one firmly and frankly, he sighed below his breath.

"Captain Tregarthen asks me to go to his house during the time I am here," says Julius Hardy, reading the note. "You see I have friends with me, whom I cannot leave. Pray explain this to the Captain

with my thanks, and tell him that I will call upon him myself to-morrow."

"He will be very glad to see your friends, I am sure," returns Harry somewhat uneasily. "Bring them up to the house, and we will make a trip to the cliffs, and show you the scenery. We have some fine views from the cliffs, gentlemen," he adds, turning to the others.

"Proposed by Jeremy Jerke, seconded by Patrick O'Gorman—'That this meeting do pledge itself to accept the proposition made by Henry Ragner, otherwise known as Harry-my-Friend.' Those who are of that opinion will signify the same in the usual way. Contrary? None. Carried. *Nemine contradicente*," cries Mr. Jerke in a breath. "We will go."

"There will be some climbing, I suppose?" says the Athlete, bending his brows as one about to perform great deeds.

"There will," says Harry-my-Friend; "and rough climbing too, if you choose to look for it."

"Nobly said, brave heart!" cries O'Gorman. "Great Cæsar's ghost, if Spinner could hear this!"

"I've no intention of breaking my neck," says Churchill; "but if you would like a little collar and elbow——"

"Break necks! Stuff!" says Corboy, bursting into one of his translations of the poets. "Look aloft, my dear fellow. In the tempest of life, when the wave and the gale, my Churchill, are around and about; if thy footing should fail, if thine eye—from any physiological reason—should grow dim, or thy courage depart. What then? Why, look aloft. Look aloft and be firm, and be fearless of heart. Be firm, my boy—be firm, and be fearless of heart!"

"I am afraid that we shall give Mrs.

Tregarthen a great deal of trouble," says Julius Hardy.

"There is no Mrs. Tregarthen," replied Harry-my-Friend, a little less courteously than his wont. "The Captain has lost all his relatives but his grand-daughter."

"Drowned at sea?"

"Drowned at sea. His only son went down in this bay sixteen years ago. Look here, gentlemen"—and opening the long window which led into the verandah, Harry pointed to the light in the window of the cottage he has left.

"The rock is just below that light. That light has been burned every night for the last sixteen years—as a warning."

"How old was the daughter when her father was lost?"

"Two years old," returned Harry-my-Friend, moving off as though the conversa-

tion was growing distasteful to him. "Then we shall see you to-morrow?"

"To breakfast," says the unconscionable Jerke, waving his hand. "And have some fish!"

"Two years old," said Julius Hardy, half to himself. "Then she must be eighteen. I wonder what she's like!"

"Come, gentlemen," says Jerke. "To bed! To-morrow we will interview the hospitable mariner."

"Let us hope the day be fair," cries Scrimminger, singing—

"Pack clouds away and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow;
Sweet airs blow soft, larks mount aloft,
To give my love good-morrow!"

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH WE FIND A WHITE MUTTON-BIRD.

THE morning broke bright and sunny, and the party promised themselves a merry day. Captain Tregarthen was waiting to receive them at his garden gate, and with cordial welcome led them into his parlour, where was laid out a breakfast which was sufficient to satisfy even the fastidious Jerke.

At the head of the table was seated a young lady dressed in blue serge and wearing a freshly-plucked rose in her hair.

"My grand-daughter, Priscilla," said the

Captain, introducing them all in turn, and winding up with the chief guest, Mr. Julius Hardy.

If Mr. Julius Hardy had wondered the night before, his wonderment was by no means lessened at the sight of the charming young girl who had grown up in the retirement of the little fishing village. He sat at her left hand, and so soon as her short embarrassment had worn off, found her a lively and intelligent companion. She had read his favourite poets. She was not wholly ignorant of his favourite authors; and although modern novels had not been among the books which John Tregarthen had, from time to time, ordered for his own and his grandchild's reading, Priscilla was sufficiently familiar with the best kind of modern literature to render her quite able to reply to Mr. Hardy's quotations from Tennyson and Keats, and to appreciate Mr.

Corboy's fantasias upon Shakespeare, Moore, and Byron. Mr. Jeremy Jerke was entranced at the unexpected opportunity of displaying his knowledge to so delightful a listener, and after touching on Fisheries, Gardening, Mining, and Navigation, promised Miss Tregarthen to give her, during their walk, a brief sketch of a paper of his, entitled 'The Earth as a Sentient Being,' which he had recently read to the amazement and edification of an Æsthetical Society in Melbourne with which he was connected. Corboy outdid himself in adaptations; and Churchill, having ascertained that Priscilla was properly impressed with the glory and grandeur of the Anglo-Saxon race, told O'Gorman that the typical British Workman need seek no further for a mate. As for O'Gorman, he sat athletically dumb, and could only cry out to Hardy, in a pause between the laughter, "I say, Julius,

old man, wouldn't Spinner have enjoyed this!"

Breakfast over, Mr. Tregarthen volunteered to show them the view from the cliff. "I had expected my Partner to come with us," he said, "but he left word that he had to go to Phillip Island this morning. He won't be back again until mid-day."

"Harry-my-Friend, as you call him," says Julius Hardy. "Ay, ay! a fine fellow!"

"With the biceps of a gladiator!" says O'Gorman, feeling his own.

"I was going to ask him to do me the favour of a little collar and elbow," says Churchill, viciously pushing his spectacles tighter on his pugnacious nose. "He ought to have a hug like a bear."

"The rugged Pyrrhus who was popularly supposed to be like the Hyrcanian beast," says Corboy, "would have but little chance

with him. He gives the world assurance of a *man*, my dear Captain Tregarthen."

"He is very good and kind," says Priscilla, her colour rising, "though perhaps he may be a little rough in his manner."

"That's right, Prissy," says her grandfather, evidently pleased. "Always stand up for your friends. Harry is indeed a fine fellow, and any one might be proud to know him."

"He seems indeed to deserve all the praise you bestow on him, sir," says Hardy, feeling unreasonably nettled at Priscilla's warmth of language. "But unless we mean to miss the morning we should be starting."

"I hope he doesn't intend to throw her away upon that lout," thought he, and then laughed at himself for his sudden interest in a fisherman's daughter, whom he had but known for half-an-hour.

The walk along the cliffs was but a repetition of the scene at the breakfast-table.

Julius Hardy and Corboy escorted the pretty Priscilla. O'Gorman and Churchill returning at intervals during the performance of tremendous feats of rock-climbing, slapped their manly chests and called upon boundless Nature to take them to her bosom. Thomas Turnover Scrimminger (with his bundle under his arm) walked behind Hardy as a sort of paternal rear-guard, and hummed the fag ends of nautical ballads. Mr. Jerke had taken possession of the Captain, and when they reached the point where Priscilla had met Gipsy George the day before, Tregarthen vowed that he had never laughed so much in his lifetime.

"That is what we call the Mutton-bird Rock," said Priscilla, pointing to a huge

pinnacle of cliff that jutted toweringly up on the left hand. "See the number of birds!" In fact at the sound of a gladiatorial halloo from the magnificent lungs of O'Gorman, a huge black cloud seemed to rise in the air, and to circle with a deafening clamour of wings above their heads.

"It is a grand sight," said Hardy. "A grand sight. Did you ever read Montgomery's *Pelican Island*, Miss Tregarthen?"

"Never."

"It describes a scene like this, and strangely enough it was inspired by a description given by Flinders, your great Australian voyager, of this very bay."

"No? Was it, indeed?" says Priscilla, and off they went upon the fascinating topic of Australian discovery at once.

"Fancy this scene reproduced on thin paper in five minutes and a half, and sold

in Bourke Street for a penny at nine o'clock to-morrow morning!" cries Scrimminger, flourishing his stick. "A fortune!—a fortune! Wait till I get the Penny Peep-show!"

"What is that white object among them?" asked Hardy, suddenly. "I thought mutton-birds were always black."

"I never saw one any other colour," said Priscilla. "What is it, Grandy?"

Tregarthen unslung his telescope and looked.

"It is a mutton-bird, sure enough," said he. "What a strange thing!"

"An Albino, without doubt," says Jeremy Jerke. "Nature often makes black appear white, and *wiky wersa.*"

"And *what?*" says Hardy.

"Wiky wersa—two Latin words. You English university people call them *vice versa,* I believe, and you're wrong."

where all was brightness and beauty, where green trees waved and sweet birds sang. Alas for the poor Captain's hopes: it was a shore to which the boat of his honest Partner had never come.

In less than ten minutes Julius Hardy had reached the crevice into which the white bird had disappeared, and, supported above and below by O'Gorman and the geologist, was manœuvring how to secure the prize without getting his fingers pecked. This difficulty was overcome with the aid of the thick gloves which the Athlete had donned to drive the coach of yesterday; and having tied his prisoner in his handkerchief, Julius gave a shout of joy and prepared to return. But to return was not so easy. Just as he was rounding the angle of the big rock, at the foot of which Priscilla had passed the previous noontide, a figure swung itself from out the bushes

and dropped upon the very stone which the climber had marked as his next resting-place. It was Gipsy George! Hardy missed his footing, dropped the bird to clutch at a shrub, missed that also, and fell.

The Gipsy caught the bundle as it descended, cleared the rock at a bound, and, almost at the same moment that Julius Hardy, with a sprained ankle and some scratches, rolled to Priscilla's feet, her old playfellow placed the prize she had desired in her hand.

To his astonishment she pushed aside the handkerchief, gave him a fiercer look than he ever remembered to have seen on her face, and made a step forward, as though to raise the fallen man. Churchill and O'Gorman, however, were by his side in a moment, and lifted him white and helpless from the ground.

"Oh, Mr. Hardy!" cried Priscilla. "I'm

so sorry! I hope you're not hurt!" and then she drew back to her grandfather.

"It's nothing," Hardy made effort to say, but a sprained ankle is by no means a painless injury, and his face showed that he was suffering.

The Athlete was equal to the emergency.

"Handy-dandy, noble heart!" cried he to Churchill, and in another minute Julius Hardy was seated on their interlaced hands, with an arm round each one's neck.

"To the cottage!" says Mr. Jerke, producing his flute with a muscular spasm, and piping up the Marseillaise "*En avant! Marchons!*" and to these dulcet notes the procession started.

All this time no one had taken any notice of Gipsy George. He stood on the spot where he had alighted, the unhappy white bird, the cause of all the trouble, struggling at his feet.

As Priscilla turned to go he caught her sleeve.

"I am sorry, Priscilla," he said. "I didn't mean to make him fall."

But Priscilla twitched her sleeve away, and the lad saw that her dark eyes were full of tears. His brown face turned crimson in an instant, and then the crimson slowly faded to a yellow whitish hue, not pleasant to look at.

"Already!" said he, watching the retreating figures of Hardy and his bearers. "Well, I might have expected it," he added, in his own tongue. "What is the proverb? 'When the Gentile life and the Gipsy life cross it's a bad life to lead.'"[1] He stooped and released the unlucky bird, and then thrusting the handkerchief into his pocket, he scrambled up the cliff and

[1] *When Gorgio mushe's merripen and Romany chals merripen wels kettaney, kek kosto merripen see.*

followed the returning party. "I'll see where he goes at any rate," said he, and with a savage laugh broke into another of his wild chants—

"Oprey the rukh adrey the wesh
Are chiriclo and chiricli;
Tuley the rukh adrey the wesh
Are pireno and pireni!"[1]

Arrived at the cottage, Hardy was speedily put out of pain. A cold bandage round his ankle, a cane lounging chair, some lunch and a cigar, set him at ease.

"Lie up for a day or so," says Tregarthen, "and you'll soon be all right."

"A day or so means a fortnight, I am afraid," said Julius Hardy.

[1] Freely—

"I see, I see, in forest tree,
The little male and female dove;
Below the tree I see, I see,
The lover and his ladye love!"

"Well, Priscilla shall nurse you, and when you are ready to go, Harry-my-Friend shall run you over to Hastings," cried the Captain, heartily.

"It is Fate, Miss Tregarthen, which has thrown me on your hands."

"Ulysses and Nausicaa," says Corboy. "Eh, Scrimminger?"

But Scrimminger, who had had his experiences, only fell to whistling softly and looking out of the window.

A silence fell, which Churchill applied himself to break.

"Patsy!" he cried, "come out on the lawn, and I'll try a fall with ye!"

So the party was broken up. Tregarthen got enmeshed by Mr. Jerke and the Theory of Tidal Waves, O'Gorman and Churchill roamed athletically round, Corboy and Scrimminger discussed a new Motive Power which should supersede Steam, and Priscilla and Julius Hardy talked. How swiftly

and how pleasantly passed that sunny noontide!

With sundown came Harry-my-Friend. He looked concerned for Hardy's accident, and eyed Priscilla with grave interest while she recounted the details of the misadventure. To Tregarthen's honest expression of hospitality, and suggestion concerning the boat voyage to Hastings, Harry-my-Friend said only, "Mr. Hardy will be more comfortable here, I have no doubt, and I will take him to Hastings at any time." This said, he set himself to cutting bread-and-butter, and assisting—in a deft, sailor-like way—in the spreading of the cloth and the arrangements of the seats.

"Tea" was almost as merry a meal as breakfast. Jeremy Jerke was enraptured at everything.

"You must come and see me in Melbourne," he said. "Come up next week, and I will show you round."

"I haven't been in Melbourne for fifteen years," says the Captain.

"Nor your Partner?" asks Scrimminger, addressing him.

"I have never been there at all," says Harry-my-Friend. "I might have gone often enough, but I did not care."

"And I have never been either," said Priscilla, "and I care very much. We'll all come and see you some day, Mr. Jerke."

"I tell you what!" cries Jerke, impetuously scribbling his address on a card. "We'll make Mr. Tregarthen a member of the Companions."

"Grand idea!" cries O'Gorman.

"Splendid notion!" echoes Churchill.

"A worthy addition to our ranks!" says Corboy. "Hang out our banners on the outward walls. The cry—so I am credibly informed—is, 'Still they come!'"

"What are the Companions?" asked Tregarthen.

"A Club," returned Jerke. "A club sacred to Shakespeare and the Nine Muses. A cave of Adullam, whither come all who are in debt or discontented! The Native Companions, sir, are a society bound together by the watchwords—'No Frills,' and 'Honour!'—a society whereof I am the Worthy Ancient, Mr. Thomas Turnover Scrimminger, the Good Lieutenant, and my esteemed friend, Erasmus Rumbelow, to whom I hope to have the honour of soon introducing you, the Noble Captain!"

"I don't quite comprehend," began Tregarthen.

"Of course not. Never mind. You will comprehend by and by. I shall enter your name when I return to town. When you want me, call at that address. Say no more!"

The Captain put the card into his capacious pocket with a simple smile. "You are very good," he said. "If I should ever come to town, I will call; but I am afraid that I am not likely to go for some time."

"Who can tell?" says Mr. Jerke, gaily. "Miss Tregarthen, with your permission, I will smoke in the verandah, and O'Gorman will oblige us with a song."

The Athlete, however, declared that he could not sing; but volunteered to recite the 'Charge of the Light Brigade,' which he did, "flashing his sword in air" and "sabring the gunners there" with astounding gymnastic and vocal vigour. Then Scrimminger sang—

"When she cam' ben she bobbit,
And when she cam' ben she sobbit;
And when she cam' ben she kissed Cockpen,
And then denied that she did it!"

Then Mr. Jerke, having finished his cigar, gave the company the 'Last Rose of Summer' on his flute with intense pathos. Then it was discovered that Priscilla had been accustomed to sing glees with some of her schoolmates, and Mr. Julius Hardy bethought him that he once had sung a glee; so with Scrimminger as Third, the Trio were, in a few minutes, inquiring if the Shepherds "had seen their Phillis pass that wa-ay"—

"—had se-e-e-e-en,
—had se-e-e-e-en,
Had seen their Phillis pass that way!"

The Captain was so delighted with this that he cleared his honest throat and sang them a tremendous sea-song about one "Nicholl," who was

"A Cornish man,
A little beside Bohide-a;
And he manned forth a good black bark,
With fifty oars a-side-a!"

Which nautical experiment was undertaken for the purpose of capturing one "John Dory," who had promised the "King of France" to bring him all the "churls in Merrie England." It need not be said that Nicholl was successful, and that, after some fourteen verses,

> "The grappling hooks were brought at length,
> The brown bill and the sword a;"

and that, to the glory of English arms,

> "John Dory at length, for all his strength,
> Was clapt fast under board-a!"

This effort of the Captain's was received with so much applause that he was constrained to say that the company had never heard his Partner sing, or they would think but meanly of his own efforts.

"Harry-my-Friend," cries Mr. Jerke, "sing something."

Harry-my-Friend, who is behind his pipe in the darkest corner of the verandah, is

heard to say that he doesn't know any songs worth singing.

"Nonsense!" says Julius Hardy from his chair. "You know plenty, I'm sure, my fine fellow! Sing us a good sea-song, an old-fashioned ballad—anything."

"I really am afraid that you will find it dull, sir," says Harry-my-Friend.

"Please, dear Harry, sing," says Priscilla, as though struck by a sudden sense of duty unfulfilled. "You can sing beautifully, you know."

Thus pressed, Harry-my-Friend is silent for a moment, and presently, from out the dusky porch, trills the most exquisite tenor. Scrimminger and Hardy look at each other in amazement.

"I have a ship in the North Countrie,
And she goes by the name of the Golden Vanity;
I'm afraid she will be taken by some Turkish gallee
As she sails upon the Lowlands Low.

"Then up starts our little cabin-boy,
Saying, 'Master, what will you give me if I do them destroy?'
'I will give you gold, I will give you store;
You shall have my daughter when I return on shore,
If you sink them in the Lowlands Low.'

"The boy he bent his breast, and away he jumped in:
He swam till he came to this Turkish galleon
As she laid in the Lowlands Low.

"The boy he had an auger to bore two holes at twice;
While some were playing cards and some were playing dice,
He let the water in, and it dazzled to their eyes,
And he sank them in the Lowlands Low.

"The boy he bent his breast, and away he swam again,
Saying, 'Master, take me up or I shall be slain,
For I've sunk 'em in the Lowlands Low.'

"'I'll not take you up,' the master he cried;
'I'll not take you up,' the master replied;
'I will kill you, I will shoot you, I will send you with the tide—
I will sink you in the Lowlands Low.'

"The boy he swam round all by the starboard side;
They laid him on the deck, and it's there he soon died;
Then they sewed him up in the black bull's hide,
And they threw him overboard to go down with the tide—
And they sunk him in the Lowlands Low!"

"And most ungrateful conduct, too!" cries Mr. Jeremy Jerke.

"The way of the world," says Corboy, moodily. "The true hero always comes worst off."

"Wait till I get the Penny Peepshow!" cries Scrimminger.

"Thank you, Mr. Ragner," says Hardy. "You have indeed a beautiful voice."

But Harry-my-friend said nothing in reply to all this, save that the song was an old song, and, he was afraid, quite out of date. So, after a parting glass of rum and general giving of good wishes, Mr. Julius Hardy's friends departed for the

Pilchard Inn, leaving Mr. Julius Hardy to his recovery.

"Don't forget the Native Companions!" shouted back Jeremy Jerke, as he closed the wicket gate. "You have the address. Whenever you come to town, drop in."

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH WE BECOME PARTNERS IN A LOVE STORY.

For nearly two months Julius Hardy was an inmate of the little cottage at Pencarrow. The injury done to his ankle was more severe than it had at first appeared; and, when he got well, he found that it was more necessary for him to go to the mine at Kilgunda than to return to town. Captain Tregarthen having pleasantly settled in his own mind the course and manner of the rest of his life, was only too well pleased to have some one with whom to converse. "I have written up my log," he was accustomed to say to

Hardy, "and shall just live on quietly with my little girl here." For the Captain, in his simplicity, regarded Julius Hardy as a passing visitor. The marriage question he considered definitely settled, and that so soon as Harry-my-Friend had "thought it over," he would ask Priscilla in the usual way. "Here's Tregarthen and Co.! Mr. Hardy," he was wont to say over the evening pipe; and Hardy would drink the toast at first in all honesty.

The fact was that Mr. Julius Hardy, at the time when he sprained his ankle, had no more intention of falling in love with Priscilla, or causing Priscilla to fall in love with him, than he had of emigrating to Cochin China. He came to the Captain's cottage by accident, and was detained by accident. Priscilla was pretty certainly, and interesting. Granted. But she was quite uncultivated, and wholly ignorant

of the world. In no way a woman to whom Mr. Julius Hardy, with life just opening fair before him, would lose either his heart or his head. No! Fortune had laid him up in a fishing village, and had given him a pretty and agreeable nurse by virtue of the Law of Compensation. It was indeed pleasant, for one already tired of the world and its dissipations—as Mr. Hardy often fancied himself to be—to watch the tide of life so smoothly flowing in this sequestered nook, to converse with the honest Tregarthen, to contemplate the future happiness of Harry-my-Friend, and to explore, with kindly compliment and judicious tenderness, the beautiful and virgin soul of Priscilla. This was all. This was very charming. But this was all.

Priscilla herself never imagined that the Prince with the sprained ankle, who had

fallen from heaven into Pencarrow, could, by any possibility, declare love for her. She was too far beneath him, and too meanly born—too simply reared. Priscilla was not goose enough to believe that the tales in the story-books came true now-a-days. Not she. Heigh-ho! And she sighed so loudly that the Captain, who was going to bed after expatiating to Mr. Hardy upon the virtues of his Partner, knocked at the door to ask if she had called him.

Nor was this romantic feeling concerning the Great World in any way dispelled by the contemptuous fashion in which it pleased Mr. Julius Hardy to talk of it.

"You are inclined to think highly of that which you have not seen, Miss Priscilla," said he. "Believe me that most of the 'ladies and gentlemen,' as you call them, are merely very hardworking tradespeople;

and that they are not only less honest than your own friends, but that the lives which they lead are infinitely more stupid. The only real pleasure they have is to get away into the country and live as you do."

"And my only pleasure, then, is to get away into town and live as they do?" said Priscilla, not without some mischievous truth.

"Not quite. You would tire, as they have tired; but when they went back to the pavement, you could come back to Nature, and Nature has always something new to show you."

"I should like to be rich though," said Priscilla, meditatively.

"A mistake," says Hardy. "One can do without wealth, but love is a necessity. The 'stalled ox and hatred therewith' is not good eating. If we do not find love in marriage we must seek it elsewhere.

But this sort of conversation is not fit for you," he continued, suddenly awakening to the consciousness that he had been rather thinking aloud than conversing. "There are, of course, exceptions to every rule. Moreover, with so grand a sunset and so fine a sea, my dear Priscilla," says Mr. Hardy, portentously paternal, "we should forget such sordid topics. Let us go and meet Grandy, and—and our Uncle with the funny name."

Upon which Priscilla falls into silence, and reflects upon Mr. Hardy's magnanimity in refusing Wealth without Love.

"Ah," says she to herself, when star-gazing in her little room that night, "what is Wealth without Love—without Love?"

But though Tregarthen was happy in his ignorance, his partner was by no means satisfied. In his serious way Harry-my-Friend was very uncomfortable. He had

been in love with Priscilla ever since she was a child, and had looked forward to a marriage with her in some dim future, as the crowning reward of a life of good and simple deeds. When Tregarthen proposed to him to ask that question of all other questions which he most longed and feared to ask, he was overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness. He knew that Priscilla regarded him as a man of staid middle age, wholly past the spring of youth and love, and he had often checked his expressions of feeling by reason of the knowledge. The advent of Julius Hardy showed him how utterly unfit was his own mind,—honest and true as it was, —to mate with hers. He had held her on his knee as a baby, he had heard her repeat her lessons as a child; nay, in order that nothing of evil might lurk in them, he had gravely read every book she owned

before he gave them to her, and yet—the first time she met a party of clever gentlemen, she and they go soaring away into regions out of his eye and earshot. It was with Harry-my-Friend as it might be with some soft-hearted clown who, having tenderly watched an imprisoned lark, thinking to tame it by very kindness, should open one day the cage and see the little brown bird, exultant in music, fly straight to its native heaven!

One other kept watch upon Priscilla,—the boy whose fierce blood spinning in his veins bid him make no pause between the desire and the possession of aught that he pursued. "I love her," said Gipsy George, "and I am jealous!" It might be that in his barbaric disdain of self-concealment he was the most honest of any of them.

Julius Hardy had not been long domesticated at Pencarrow when the Company's

yacht, from the mines, anchored in the little bay. The *Gannet* was a half-decked boat of six tons. She was lugger-rigged, and besides being larger than any boat in the bay, had the reputation of being a fast sailer. Mr. Julius Hardy rather prided himself on his seamanship, and was accustomed to run down from Sandridge in this craft with no other companion than old Philip the ship-keeper or one of many boys employed about the settlement at Kilgunda. Hardy ordered the *Gannet* to be brought round to Tregarthen's jetty, installed the fisherman Bickley as his first lieutenant, and ran out on little fishing and shooting excursions, as the whim took him. Very often Priscilla and her grandfather would take part in these little trips. Once Priscilla and Harry-my-Friend came, but the honest fellow suffered so many heart-stabs that he pleaded all

and any business to avoid going a second time.

Very often Mr. Julius Hardy would take as a companion the lively and entertaining lad whom he had met at Kilgunda, and who had shown a marked desire for his company and patronage. Whenever Gipsy George was with Mr. Julius Hardy, the conversation turned, after a little, to one subject—Harry Ragner. George Meggot professed a great admiration for Harry, but mingled with the expression of admiration was some considerable contempt.

"It is a pity that he is so dull," said Gipsy George, "for he is a thoroughly good fellow. Do you know, Mr. Hardy, that he is a very religious person?"

"I don't like very religious persons," says Mr. Hardy, pulling up his line with a jerk. "They are generally hypocrites."

"Well, there's no need for Harry-my-

Friend to be a hypocrite, for he's got all he wants, or will get it shortly."

"I don't understand you."

"He's going to marry Miss Priscilla—at least so every one says."

"Indeed!" says Mr. Julius Hardy, with trained composure. "He's a fortunate fellow!"

But the next time they spoke of Harry-my-Friend and his success in life, Mr. Hardy was not so indifferent.

"I hope he'll make her a good husband," said he.

"Oh, yes," says Gipsy George, "he'll do that. He's steady enough, if that's what you mean. It's not like marrying a boy."

"No," says Julius Hardy, with some annoyance. "But the Captain wishes it, and he knows best."

By and by Mr. Julius Hardy found

himself receiving information as to Priscilla's early days; and being one day told that, to Gipsy George's knowledge, no one had ever been held to be her sweetheart, became angrily conscious that he must have asked the question.

"What am I doing in this place?" he asked himself that night. "Not that I am in love with the little thing,—she is too simple and good for—for—and as for marriage—pooh! stuff! I shall go back to Melbourne to-morrow."

But he did not go, not being of that cowardly, or courageous spirit, which recognizes that there are some kinds of danger in which the bravest thing to do is to fly, and never look behind.

One day it happened that the Captain himself desiring to visit Cowes, at a time when Harry-my-Friend was away in their own boat, became a passenger in the

Gannet. The tide was strong, the breeze unfavourable, and the cruise longer than ordinary.

Since Priscilla's playfellow had grown into a wild young man Tregarthen had never liked him, and George Meggot knew this. Here was an opportunity to establish a favourable opinion, and Gipsy George exerted his powers of conversation to their utmost. He succeeded in getting the Captain into good humour, and then—curiously enough—the pair found themselves talking about Mr. Julius Hardy.

"I hear he's to be married to a rich young lady," says Gipsy George.

"Ay, ay!" says the unsuspecting Captain. "He deserves it. He's a fine young gentleman."

"He is, and so kind-hearted. Miss Priscilla thinks there is no one like him."

"Eh?" says Tregarthen, bending his brows.

But the olive brow of the Kaulo Camlo was virginal in its innocence. Gipsy George was *hukni*[1] from scalp to sole, and was most uneasy when most truthful.

"And he thinks a great deal of her. He is always talking of her when we're fishing."

"Ay, ay!" says Tregarthen again, but not so cheerfully as before.

"There's only one person whom I don't think he likes," say the childlike red lips; "and I can't make out why."

"Who's that, pray?"

"Harry-my-Friend."

"Ay, ay! Ay, ay!" says Tregarthen, this time very gloomily indeed, and falls into a fit of mental abstraction, from which not even Gipsy George's powers of anecdote can revive him.

[1] *Hukni*, rusé, deceitful.

The next morning, Julius Hardy and George Meggot being away in the boat, the Captain had a long talk with Harry Ragner.

"I'm uneasy, Partner," said he.

"Sorry to hear it, sir," returned the other, not without some conscious confusion. "What are you uneasy about?"

"About Mr. Hardy."

"What of him, sir? You asked him here, and he came."

"I doubt if I was wise, Harry-my-Friend."

Harry-my-Friend raised his eyebrows.

"You could not foresee that he would stop so long," he said at last, adding, with that relentless justice which was a part of his nature, "He has done nothing while he has been here to make you dislike him."

"He *may* have been making love to Priscilla," said the Captain, sternly.

This was a sore thrust, but Harry-my-Friend took it bravely.

"Unless you have good reason, sir," he said, "you should not accuse any man of meanness."

"Meanness!" fires Tregarthen. "Why, the lass is worth a dozen of him!"

"True," returns Harry, with a gulp. "She is worth a better husband than any one here would make her. I did not mean that. It is meanness to accept a man's hospitality and use it to steal the love of one dear to him."

"Ay, that's true enough," says the Captain.

"To steal affections that are the property of another man is base enough at any time," says Harry-my-Friend; "but the better sort among the base, at least, contrive to quarrel with a man before they rob him. No, I don't think young Hardy

would be so friendly with you were he practising with Priscilla."

"Do you remember what I said the other night, Partner? Why don't you go and ask her yourself, like a man?"

"I can't," says the other, turning away.

"What!" cries the Captain in great amazement, "you don't mean to say that you don't—— No, you're never going to say that you don't love her!"

"I am not going to say that, Captain," says Harry-my-Friend sadly, and with effort; "but isn't it possible that she may not love me?"

"I don't believe it. Why, you're the best match in the place — the tallest, strongest, best-hearted——"

"No, no!" interrupts Harry-my-Friend eagerly, "I am a very rude fellow at best. Besides, women don't judge of men by

their hearts, but by their faces or their manners. I am uncouth and rude—and—ignorant."

Captain Tregarthen struck his hand upon his thigh with a roar of disgust. "Ignorant! You have an honest soul and a strong arm! You can earn your living and something more."

"I can, thank God," says Harry-my-Friend, reverently.

"Then, what are you growling for?" says the Captain, gloomily.

"Miss Priscilla," says Harry-my-Friend, "is far above me."

"If she's my daughter, you're my Partner," cries the Captain, stalwartly oblivious of more æsthetic meaning.

"I really do not think, sir, that she would be happy as my wife, though I would do my best to make her so," continues Harry-my-Friend. "I love her so

much, sir, you see," he says, apologizing to the old man, "that I am bound to think of her happiness before my own. I am afraid, sir, that it would not be wise for her to marry me."

"But she *shall* marry you!" said the Captain.

"I fear not of her own free will," returned Harry, with a shake of his honest head, "and I would die drowned at her feet sooner than be her husband, unless by her best heart's love. No, sir. You speak of what is not to be!"

"Harry-my-Friend!" says the Captain, solemnly, "you are talking nonsense. You've had no experience of life. I know women. Why, she's my own granddaughter! Ask her, and see what she says. Ask her, Partner!"

Harry-my-Friend stood for some time gloomily downcast.

"I will ask her," he said at length, "but I am sure she will refuse."

"But if she accepts?"

Harry-my-Friend blushes burning crimson, and turns away. If she accepts! If Paradise should open to the scourged anchorite! If——

"I will ask her," he says, slowly moving to the boat.

"And I will tell her the truth about this man Hardy first," said the Captain to himself.

When Mr. Julius Hardy returned that night, he found the Captain and his Partner alone in the little parlour.

"Where's Missy?" he asked, in the hearty fashion born of sea-breezes and hunger.

"I don't know," says the Captain, radiantly happy. "Do *you*, Harry?"

Harry blushes, and shifts his heavy boots for reply.

"Sit down, Mr. Julius, sit down. Fill your glass, sir. Here's Tregarthen, Co., and Son!"

"Eh!" says Julius Hardy, half rising.

"My Son-in-law, sir!" says the Captain, waving his hand majestically towards Harry-my-Friend. "My Son and Partner."

Julius Hardy prided himself on his self-possession. He filled his glass with steady hand, and honoured the toast with easy good breeding.

"You are a very fortunate fellow, Mr. Ragner," said he.

Harry-my-Friend could only cough and bow, expressing thereby none of the generous and noble emotions which were thronging his great heart. How mistaken he had been! What injustice he had done to Mr. Hardy! How meanly he had

thought of Priscilla! Should he ever forget how, after an interview with her grandfather, the girl whom he loved with all the passion of a lover, and the reverent tenderness of a father, had placed her hand in his and promised to be his wife! How she had suffered him to kiss her lips, and gravely plighted him her troth! His doubts and suspicions had vanished into air, and he was stunned with the bewildering sense of his own happiness.

Mr. Julius Hardy, however, was not so pleasantly satisfied. He was, in fact, exceedingly angry. He had not quite realized his position with Priscilla, until he found himself supplanted by another man. His vanity was wounded, and his self-esteem torn and bleeding. Confound all women! The most simple of them were born coquettes. Pah! he would get back to Melbourne.

Thus ruminating, he made his cigar an excuse to stroll into the garden. His footsteps strayed in the direction of Priscilla's Waterfall, and, lo!—there, in the grass at the brink, lay Priscilla herself, shrouded in a cloak, and shivering with sobs.

"Priscilla!"

She raised her head at the sound of his voice, and then laid it down again feebly.

"Allow me to congratulate you, Miss Tregarthen."

She rose to her knees, with piteous hands outstretched.

"You need not insult me, Mr. Hardy."

The tone melted Hardy in a moment. He was down by her side with his arm round her.

"My child! Insult you! What is the meaning of this?"

"I am going to be married," said Priscilla. "Did not Grandy tell you?"

Julius Hardy groaned.

"Have I then lost you?"

The girl rose indignant.

"How mean you are!" she said.

"Mean? I!——"

"Yes. You, who are already engaged to be married, come here to amuse yourself with me. Oh, it is true! Grandfather told me so!"

Julius Hardy sprang to his feet, overwhelmed by the unexpected invention. In his honest anger he poured forth all protestations. He offered any and every proof. He had never loved woman before. He would not have her mated to that boor. What was fortune, position, career?—nothing! She did not love Harry Ragner. Ah! she did not! No, she could not!

Then came the customary love-folly.

"Did she love another? Could she love *him?*"

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH WE BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NATIVE COMPANIONS.

THE honourable and exclusive Society of Native Companions was the product of the fertile brain of Corboy. Impressed with a profound veneration for Shakespeare and a profound contempt for respectability, Corboy had projected the Idea of a Club into the minds of some dozen of his comrades, until somebody hired a cellar behind a trunk-maker's shop, and declared the same the habitat of good-fellowship.

The Native Companions called themselves —in pleasant allusion to the trunk-maker's cellar—Comrades of the Cave, and were

bound to each other by divers and frightful solemnities. The admission of a Neophyte was something tremendous in its Shakespearian ceremony, and as the repetition of pass-words, countersigns, and oaths was by the Constitution needful whenever two Companions met to have a glass of beer, the atmosphere in the neighbourhood of the trunk-maker's was heavy with Elizabethan execrations.

The Constitution was the joint composition of Corboy, Jerke, Scrimminger, and a gentleman known as Erasmus Rumbelow.

Mr. Rumbelow was a remarkable person. Possessed of brilliant abilities, considerable scholarship, the profession of a barrister, and the pen of a ready writer, he had arrived at sixty years of age without the accumulation of sixty brass farthings. Nor did his impecuniosity trouble him. A true

philosopher, he took the world as it came, slept in the shadow and basked in the shine. "I am the leader of the bar," he was accustomed to say. "My father had the confidence of his Sovereign,—I can lecture like Coleridge,—I can write like Addison, and I haven't sixpence to pay for my dinner." One hard winter Mr. Erasmus Rumbelow sought—philosophically—the attic retirement of a public institution. When spring came round, and he emerged, his friends were inclined to ignore the period of hybernation. Not so Mr. Rumbelow. "I have left my palace!" said he. "I am now a member of three Universities, sir! I sign myself Erasmus Rumbelow, of Oxford, Cambridge, and the Benevolent Asylum!" What was poverty to a man like this? Bohemia appreciated his merits, and the Companions unanimously elected him their Captain.

The officers of the Native Companions were three in number, viz.—

The Noble Captain.
The Good Lieutenant.
The Worthy Ancient.

As Mr. Jerke has said, he himself occupied the position of Worthy Ancient, while T. T. Scrimminger filled that of Good Lieutenant. The watchwords were—No Frills, and Honour. But let me quote the Constitution itself.

This, duly written on parchment and suspended from a nail in the cellar, read as follows:—

THE NATIVE COMPANIONS,

OTHERWISE,

COMRADES OF THE CAVE.

CONSTITUTION.

1.—The name of the Club shall be the NATIVE COMPANIONS.

2.—The watchwords of the Club shall be "No Frills," and "Honour."

3.—The objects of the Club shall be—

To "minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart.
Therein (we) the patients
Must minister to ourselves."

4.—The officers of the Club shall be—

The Noble Captain
The Good Lieutenant,
And
The Worthy Ancient.

5.—The rule of the NOBLE CAPTAIN shall be an Absolute Monarchy, his decisions being without appeal.

6.—The GOOD LIEUTENANT shall consider himself the Eye of the Noble Captain, and the Worthy Ancient as the Hand thereof.

7.—The WORTHY ANCIENT shall act as Bursar and Custodian of the Treasure-chest. He shall also keep a record of the proceedings of the Cave when in conclave assembled.

8.—The Cave shall be open day and night to all Comrades. Conclave to commence nightly at 8 p.m., when the NOBLE CAPTAIN will Take His State.

9.—A Solemn Conclave can be convened by any comrade, at any time, by the transmission of a request in writing to the WORTHY ANCIENT.

10.—The NOBLE CAPTAIN shall have power at any time to Change the Topic of Conversation, and also to forbid the DRAWERS from supplying any Comrade with alcoholic or fermented liquor.

11.—The subscription to the Cave shall be one shilling a week, paid monthly in advance.

12.—Neophytes to be elected by ballot, *one* black ball to exclude.

13.—In the event of any Comrade behaving in manner contrary, in the opinion of any other Comrade, to the spirit and objects of the Cave, he shall be Impeached.

14.—The ceremonial to be observed in opening Conclave shall be as follows:—

Each Comrade shall make Obeisance to the NOBLE CAPTAIN, placing his right hand on his heart, and saying, "No Frills." The NOBLE CAPTAIN shall place *his* hand upon *his* heart, and courteously returning the salutation, shall reply, "Honour." A libation shall then be made, and the NOBLE CAPTAIN shall Take His State.

NOTE.

The Ceremonies upon the Admission of a Neophyte, the Impeachment of a Comrade, and the Dismissal to the Valley of Dry Bones, shall be preserved by

Oral Tradition only. And it shall be specially impressed upon each and every Comrade that secrecy shall be a law among all Comrades, that secrecy shall mean a jealous guarding of the names of the Companions, the Acts and Constitution of the Cave, and its place of meeting.

The whimsicality of the business made its success, and recruits for the ragged regiment poured in so fast that the trunk-maker's cellar was soon abandoned for a more imposing residence.

At a meeting of Companions in solemn conclave assembled, shortly after the return of Mr. Jerke and his friends from Pencarrow, it was resolved, on the motion of Companion Churchill, seconded by Companion Corboy, "That the Worthy Ancient and the Good Lieutenant be requested to make search for a cave suitable to the increasing number of comrades."

The Noble Captain spoke to the motion, giving a sketch of the cave-dwellers of Gaul

and the architecture of the middle ages. "What we require," said the Noble Captain, at the conclusion of his speech, "is a domicile at once spacious and secure; being, on the one hand, sufficiently remote from the disturbing influence of those persons called creditors, to enable the Companions to pursue the even tenor of their pecuniary ways, and, on the other hand, situate in advantageous propinquity to some establishment licensed to retail fermented and spirituous liquors, at reasonable charges and with liberal credit." This description chimed so exactly with the notions of the majority of the Companions that it was resolved that the Noble Captain join his services to those of the Good Lieutenant and the Worthy Ancient. The result of their expedition was the hiring of a three-roomed house in a place called Blossom's Alley, behind the *Peacock* Office. "The

habitation," said the Noble Captain, when the Comrades met to view their new abode, "is small but elegant. It has three apartments, including a kitchen. A tap in the back yard offers opportunities for the luxury of the Bath; while the fact that a blind fiddler resides next door, doubtless interests those Companions who incline to Art and Song. A hostelry, having the rural title of the Hen-and-Chickens, is over the way, and the excellent landlord has already given token of the soundness of his views in political economy by permitting me to open commercial relations with him to the extent of three noble pints daily. An extensive dust-hole at the rear affords opportunities to Companions in case of invasion by bailiffs, process-servers, and—hem—persons of that kind. The only drawback to immediate possession is a certain lack of Saponacity!"

"We can get the place washed," said the Good Lieutenant.

"The employment of those useful famuli known as charwomen would meet the Saponaceous difficulty alluded to by the Noble Captain," said Mr. Jerke.

"And be, moreover, Shakespearian," cried Corboy. "The maid who 'does the meanest chares,' you know."

So two charwomen were hired, and the Companions installed themselves.

The furniture of the Cave was, as the Noble Captain said, "useful, but unassuming." Each Comrade brought something. Mr. Jerke gave a second-hand set of Webb and Wyatt's reports. O'Gorman gave three Indian clubs, a dumb-bell, and a portrait of his pugilistic tutor, Abe Ebenezer, the Champion of the Light Weights. Corboy presented a Dicks's Pocket Shakespeare (price one shilling), to be used for taking

the oaths. Warrener, of the *Peacock* staff, gave an old camp-chair; a necklace of shark's teeth from Fiji, a cannibal fork, several lethal weapons, originally owned by the natives of the Solomon Group, and an incomplete file of the *Sydney Morning Herald.* Firedrake presented a picture of himself in the uniform of the "deah old cawh!"—to wit, the Dum-dum Yeomanry Cavalry, "known duwing the Mutiny as the Demmed Young Cutthwoats, begad!" Stockbridge gave a deal table and part of a carpenter's bench. Scrimminger made two gifts—one a model of a dismasted hulk, having a slit in her deck for contributions, and the legend, "THE HEART THAT CAN FEEL FOR ANOTHER!" lettered on her stern; the other a gigantic pewter pot, holding at least a quart, and which had once been used to moisten the gullets of the contributors to one of Scrimminger's

many defunct periodicals. This flagon was called — somewhat irreverently perhaps — the Holy Grail; and every new-comer had to drain it at a draught—if he could. Churchill purchased a complete set of *The British Workman,* together with a quarto volume, entitled *The Cornish Hug, with Hints on Collar and Elbow Wrestling,* and presented them to the Companions, imploring them, while tears dimmed his spectacles, to cultivate the Anglo-Saxon virtues. Erasmus Rumbelow sent in three bottles of Pedro-Ximenes, "a wine of colonial growth, given me by a worthy fellow named Burchsmann, whose sausages are really above contempt!" Hardy gave a gridiron and a fryingpan; while Splash, the artist, decorated the whitewashed walls with caricatures of "His Saponaceous Majesty," "How we charged at Dum-dum," "Wait till I get the *Penny Peepshow!*"

"The Hardy Coalminer at Work," "Professor Jerke on the Universe," and other pleasant jests at the foibles of the Companions.

Such were the Native Companions, some three months after the date on which my story opened.

Let the reader imagine a warm evening in December, the doors open, the tap trickling, the dust-hole convenient, scouts posted in case of alarm, and the Companions met in solemn conclave to hear a complaint brought by the Worthy Ancient against the butcher who had been honoured by being allowed to supply beef-steaks to the Cave on credit.

The Noble Captain was in the chair, having in front of him—the Chest, the Copy of Shakespeare, and the Constitution (neatly engrossed by Scrimminger) in the form of a roll of parchment. The Good

Lieutenant, with his bundle temporarily removed, sat on the Noble Captain's right, the Worthy Ancient with a raw beef-steak on a plate before him, on the Noble Captain's left.

The Constitution having been read, and every one having laid his hand upon his heart and said "No Frills and Honour," the Noble Captain ordered the roll to be called.

All were present except Companions O'Gorman, Spinner, Churchill, Corboy, and Hardy. The Worthy Ancient rose in explanation. Companion O'Gorman was absent in consequence of being in training to run Companion Spinner two thousand yards, eating forty-five bags of cherries during the interval, and preserving the stones; Companion Spinner to receive one hundred yards, and eighteen bags of cherries. Companion Corboy had left Mel-

bourne for the purpose of collecting large nuggets in the Moliagul district. He—the Worthy Ancient—held in his hand a letter in which Companion Corboy pointed out, that according to his Theory of the Deposit of the Precious Metals, nuggets of from 200 to 300 ounces must be very plentiful in the neighbourhood of Moliagul. Companion Corboy felt little doubt but that he could pick up several of the larger kind without difficulty, and had started for Beechworth yesterday, borrowing two pounds four shillings and ninepence—for which the Worthy Ancient held three acceptances at three, six, and nine months—from the Treasure Chest of the Cave.

The Noble Captain shook his head at this statement with a parental disapproval of the proceedings of Companion Corboy, and inquired where were Companions Churchill and Hardy. Companion Warrener

had seen Companion Churchill. Companion Churchill had been compelled to visit Ballarat, to lecture at the School of Mines there. The Worthy Ancient could not say what had become of Companion Hardy. Companion Hardy had only once visited the Cave since his return a week ago from Pencarrow, and that visit had been but a short one. The Worthy Ancient understood that Companion Hardy had not been seen by any one during the past ten days.

The Noble Captain shook his head more than ever at this. "I observe," said he, "by referring to the books, that Companion Hardy has been absent during the sitting of no less than six conclaves. I order that he be mulcted in the sum of ten shillings, the same to be expended in the procurement of twenty alcoholic stimulants for the twenty Comrades present. The Good Lieutenant will see this order carried

to have aged twenty years. His face was white and drawn, and his clothes hung loosely on him.

"What is the matter?" asked Jerke.

The old man looked round the room with an eager and penetrating glance.

"I want to see Julius Hardy," said he.

"He is not here," cries Scrimminger, who seemed to have leapt to conclusions quickly. "Great heaven, sir, what has happened?"

"Where is Julius Hardy?" asked the Captain again. "I want to see him."

"He is not here, I assure you," says Jerke. "We have only seen him once since his return from Pencarrow."

"When was that?"

"Ten days ago," said Scrimminger, who had been whispering with Rumbelow. "I give you my word that we know nothing either of him or his doings."

Tregarthen's eyes blazed with suppressed

fury, and he looked into every face as though to find some excuse for violence. The voice of Rumbelow recalled him to himself.

Erasmus Rumbelow, in all his eccentricities, retained the manners of a gentleman of the old school, and his good sense told him at once that the farcical absurdities of the Cave must now give place to that courtesy which is claimed by old age in distress or embarrassment.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we will consider this meeting adjourned, if you please. Mr. Tregarthen, will you favour me with a few minutes' conversation in the next room?" and beckoning Scrimminger and Jerke with his eye, the old gentleman led the way out of the conclave of astonished Companions.

A few passionate words from Tregarthen explained the matter.

"It's a lie!" said generous Jeremy. "Hardy would never do such a thing!"

"I have followed him," said Tregarthen. "He left my boat at Cowes, and came up the bay to Brighton in the *Gannet*. At Brighton he sent the *Gannet* away and went to Melbourne by train. There I lost him."

"She was with him?" asked Scrimminger.

The old man nodded.

Erasmus Rumbelow sighed, and laid his hand on the Captain's shoulder.

"I am afraid that this young man, whom we all trusted and liked, is a scoundrel," said he. "If so he shall have the punishment of a scoundrel. You may think us strange folks, sir,"—he waved a still handsome hand as he spoke towards the next room—"but we are, I trust, men of gentlemanly instincts, though not perhaps sur-

rounded by those evidences of taste and culture by which the world expects that gentlemen should be surrounded. If I—if we—can aid you to recover your granddaughter, you can command us."

"Tell me where I can find him," was all the Captain's reply.

There was a moment's silence, and then Jerke drew a note from his pocket-book and placed it in the hands of Mr. Rumbelow.

"ON BOARD THE *Gannet*.
December 22nd.

"DEAR JERKE,

"When you get this I shall be on my way to the Mine, by way of Hastings. The *Gannet* follows me to-night. Pray keep my absence a secret. I have urgent private business which compels me to leave town.

"Yours, J. H.

"Mind—give my address *to no one*."

Rumbelow read this aloud, and then

handed it, without a word of comment, to John Tregarthen.

The Captain took it, read it again, folded it quietly, and put it in his pocket. Then he resumed his hat, pulled out his watch, bowed gravely, and went out.

The three friends looked at each other.

"He means to follow him!" says Scrimminger.

"I have done wrong to give him the letter," cries Jerke, ever impulsive. "There is murder in that old man's face. Let me go; I will stop him!"

Old Rumbelow put out his still strong arm. "You have done right!" he said. "This is not debauchery, but seduction. Seducers must answer for themselves. Let Julius Hardy go his own way."

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH WE GO DOWN A COAL-MINE.

THE evening of the day following that upon which he had obtained the information of Julius Hardy's whereabouts, John Tregarthen presented himself at the Kilgunda Mine. He had taken the morning coach from Melbourne to Sandy Point, crossed in the mail-boat to Phillip Island, walked to Newhaven, and, notwithstanding that it was blowing half a gale of wind, had found a fisherman bold enough to put him across to Kilgunda.

"I want to see Mr. Julius Hardy," said he to the overseer. "I have important business with him."

"Mr. Hardy was here just now with young Meggot," returned Mr. McAlister. "The lad had an appointment with him. I think they have gone to the drive."

"I will go and see," said the Captain.

Arrived at the mouth of the drive—which ran in almost horizontally from the face of the cliff—he found the men had just knocked off work. Mr. Hardy had not arrived. The Captain saw Hugh Polwheal shouldering his pick in act to depart. He must have taken the other road. Oh, he was sure to come, for Gipsy George, who had gone down the workings, had said that Mr. Hardy would follow him.

The Captain deliberated a little, and then said to Polwheal,

"I will go down also; my business concerns the three of us. You need say nothing to Mr. Hardy; he expects me."

'I'm not likely to meet him," said Polwheal, cheerily, "for I'm going to the smithy. Good-night, Captain."

The Captain did not reply, but pushed rapidly on. His resolution was taken. Gipsy George was evidently in the confidence of the betrayer of Priscilla. He would conceal himself, overhear their conversation, and, at the proper moment, take Julius Hardy by the throat and kill him. The old man had so long brooded upon revenge, that murder seemed to him but an act of justice.

The Kilgunda Mine was merely a huge excavation in the face of the cliff. For ninety feet it ran straight in, and then turned in a sharp angle to the right, following the line of sea-board to Cape Patterson. Into this straight roadway of ninety feet the Captain steadily advanced, but, ere he turned the angle, the habit of

an old sailor induced him to take a glance out to sea. From the end of the drive he saw, as through a huge telescope, the panorama of the ocean. The sun had just sunk, and the huge waves rolled livid in the twilight. In the distance was a boat beating down as close to the dangerous coast as she dared. The instinct of his calling told him at once what had happened. Some adventurous fisherman had run too far out to make the Western Passage to Western Port, and was compelled to risk the dangerous double of Cape Wollomai to avoid the coming storm. As through his one all-filling thought this instinctive reflection thrust itself, he heard a growl of thunder, and saw a line of foam roll in along the indigo-coloured horizon. The wind had changed to the south. The deadliest gale of the coast was about to ravage the night. It chimed so well with

the Captain's deadly humour, that he laughed as he turned into the cavern.

That laugh was ill-omened. As he turned he heard a roar louder than that of wind and water—a terrible rumble and rattle as though a railway train was passing over his head. In another instant he fell back blinded, and suffocated, and in absolute darkness. Far down in the depth of the new working he heard the sound repeated, and with it, it seemed to him that he could distinguish a cry. In uncomprehending terror he rushed back towards the mouth of the drive, and plunged headlong against a smoking wall of ruin. There was no longer a mouth to the drive. The cliff had fallen in!

For some minutes the unhappy man did not realize the full horror of his position. He half expected to hear the clash of picks, or the sound of voices bidding him be of

good cheer. It was not until he remembered that he was at the very angle of the drive when the fall had taken place, and that ninety feet of cliff was between him and the sea, that he felt how hopeless was his chance of succour. Moreover, the workings were deserted, the men had gone home, and it was more than probable that the roar of the falling earth which had seemed to him so tremendous had been utterly drowned by the fury of the breaking tempest. Yet the landslip was sure to be discovered, and John Tregarthen ground his teeth with rage at the thought of the discoverer. Julius Hardy would discover it! Julius Hardy, the betrayer of Priscilla, would have the satisfaction of dragging out the dead body of Priscilla's grandfather, struck down on his way to execute an act of just revenge!

John Tregarthen was by nature and

habit a religious man, and, as is almost always the case with such minds, his sudden misfortune had rendered him, not only oblivious of those moral sentiments which he had formerly held dear, but impelled him to nourish feelings utterly opposed to the teachings he had once so highly valued. Lying there in the darkness, he fed his almost insane appetite for vengeance by the utterance of dreadful imprecations, and still more dreadful prayers. He vowed—in solemn set terms, couched in scriptural phraseology—that if he might be permitted to kill Julius Hardy, he would consecrate the remainder of his days to the God of vengeance. He implored to be suffered to live but for one hour, so that he might wither his erring and ungrateful child with the might of a dying parent's curse.

Hours passed in this way, and at last

he slept. When he awoke he felt his head heavy and his temples full—a burning thirst consumed him, and the air he breathed was hot. He sat up and felt in his pockets. He had three biscuits, a brandy-flask half full, some tobacco and a pipe, but no matches. He chewed a piece of the tobacco, and finding himself relieved a little, commenced to explore the angle of the mine. He had not gone far in the darkness when he fell over a body. He recognized the touch of the velveteen coat at once.

It was Gipsy George!

The boy was lying half-buried under a mass of earth, and Tregarthen thought him dead. So soon, however, as the pressure was, in some degree, removed, he sighed and spoke. He said only one word, but it was a word which made the old man thrill—"Priscilla!"

Beyond a doubt, Gipsy George knew the secret of the unhappy girl's hiding-place. Deprived of his revenge, Tregarthen would at least learn, before death overtook them both, the manner and result of the villany which had been practised on him. Setting to work with the vigour which passion lends, the Captain applied himself to remove from the body of the unfortunate boy the mass of earth and stones which lay upon it. The task was almost beyond his strength. The larger blocks had fallen partially across each other, and thus made an arch which served to sustain the weight of the enormous heap of earth under which George Meggot lay. For two hours the Captain worked at this heap, but without making any perceptible difference in its bulk. With savage determination, however, he worked on, and at last, soaked in sweat, his hands torn and bleeding, he raised the

uppermost of the two blocks and made shift to extricate the senseless body of the gipsy. Hastily forcing his brandy-flask between the lad's teeth, he poured some of the spirit down his throat. George Meggot moved and muttered, but sank again into stupor, breathing heavily.

"I had best let him rest," said the old man to himself. "He will wake by and by, and I will get all out of him."

But George Meggot did not wake. He did not speak again, but lay stretched out as one at the point of death. In vain did the Captain loosen his collar and chafe his hands between his own. In vain did he collect, in the drinking cup of the flask, some drops of water that trickled at rare intervals from the wall. In vain did he weary Heaven with prayers to bring back sense and speech but for one poor minute. The night—if it was night—passed over.

The day—if it was day—came. George Meggot kept his secret close. Tregarthen held him on his knees—watched with his ear at his heart—nursed him as a mother would nurse her child. In vain he wept over him, kissed his lips, besought God for him with such supplications as despairing love and baffled hate alone can offer. In vain! In vain!

Then, after such agony of effort, he would leave him and hasten to the other extremity of the drive, to listen if rescue was nigh, scarce daring to stay long enough to be certain of the dreadful silence, lest haply the feeble life which he was spending his own to save should flicker out in his absence. And so backwards and forwards, between hope and fear, penitence and wrath—in blackest darkness always.

This went on for uncountable minutes. Deprived of light, and having no means

of measuring time, Tregarthen thought that he had been at least five days buried when, thirty-six hours after the discovery of the accident, the picks of the furiously-working rescue were heard tapping on the outer wall. Even then, in that moment of delirious joy, his first thought was for the instrument of his vengeance. He carried the senseless body with infinite care to the point where the tapping was most distinctly heard, and when, by and by—the next morning it seemed to his impatience—a tube was thrust through, down which was conveyed tea and soup, it was George Meggot's lips which first received the life-reviving draught.

"It is the Providence of God," said the old man to himself. "He has heard me, and has preserved this life for my vengeance!"

At last the pick burst through, and in

another instant, half-blinded by the sudden light, the Captain was drawn out into day amid the cheers of the crowd.

"Take care!" he cried, so soon as he found voice. "There is another! I have nursed him in my own arms to save him!"

The men stooped and lifted. The cheers redoubled. Tregarthen bent over the burden he had borne so long, and fell back as though struck to the heart. The Providence of God had indeed been displayed; for John Tregarthen, at the risk of his own life, had saved that of his enemy!

The darkness had betrayed him. The body was that of Julius Hardy!

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH WE BARELY ESCAPE WITH OUR LIVES.

BUT what had become of the cause of all this suffering? Where was Priscilla?

On the same evening that Jeremy Jerke had received the fatal letter from his friend, the *Gannet*, obedient to the orders left with old Philip, dropped down the bay to Queenscliff. At Queenscliff Bickley went ashore and returned at nine o'clock the next morning, with a female passenger—the missing girl, Priscilla Tregarthen. Reflection seemed to have brought to the poor child remorse and pain. She looked nervous and weary, and speaking to no

one sat herself down in the stern of the lugger, and wrapped her shawl about her.

"Come," cries Bickley, "doan't be a-down-hearted, lass. We'll be beluther Phillip Island by noontide; so doan't be frit."

"I'm not frightened," said Priscilla, forcing a smile. "I'm anxious."

"Aching after home, my lass," says honest Bickley. "Ay, ay! Never fear. You'll be gansinggay to-night, my pretty, if this wind does but hold."

"Make sail, boy," says old Philip, who neither understood nor approved of the proceedings of the strange fisherman thus set in authority over him. "We must clear the Rip at the slack, and it looks like blowing."

The wind was westerly, and the *Gannet* passed Point Nepean at noon, running seven knots, under easy sail.

At two o'clock they were off the Schanck, and old Phil—used to the dangerous navigation of the Bay—shifted jibs, and took a reef in his mainsail. Bickley was for carrying on to please Priscilla, but the wind having got round to the northward, promised to blow a gale. As they ran under the Schanck, Phil cursed below his breath. The breeze had chopped to the north, and the tide was running out. The Western Passage was blocked.

"Can't we beat in, mate?" asked Bickley.

"We may beat all day," returned the other sulkily. "Try it."

So the *Gannet*, sailed on a wind, tacked east and west for four mortal hours.

"Let's run for the Eastern Passage," says Bickley, at length, putting down the helm as he spoke, and the lugger keeping as close as she dared to the Seal Rocks, ran down under the rugged lee of Phillip Island

until the black tooth of the Pyramid rose sheer on her bows. Phil, grown impatient, shook the reef out of his mainsail, and headed for Cape Wollomai. The *Gannet* leapt like a colt. The breeze was fast becoming a gale.

It was seven o'clock when Cape Wollomai rose black and sheer on their weather. Far away to the south-west the sky looked dark and threatening.

As they rounded the Point the wind, which had shifted to the north-east, broke upon them with redoubled violence.

"Down your jib, double-reef your mainsail, and keep her away!" cried Bickley.

He was obeyed, and once more the unlucky boat had to stand out to sea.

"What's to be done now?" asks Phil in a huff.

"Look ye there!" cried Bickley, pointing with one hand to the ocean, while

with the other he kept the *Gannet* steadily before the wind. "If that catches us with these cliffs on our lee, we're dowtered."

The other looked, and uttered a cry of dismay. Cape Patterson had disappeared in a cloud of mist and spray, while straight from out of the boundless southern ocean rolled a long white line, above which an indigo-coloured cloud swept, trailing.

It was just about this time that John Tregarthen, at the mouth of the mine, had noticed the danger of the boat which he did not recognize.

"A southerly burster!" cried Phil, alive at once to his danger, and prepared to meet it. "We shall have our work to do, mate!"

Bickley nodded, and then the two men, each absorbed in watching the motions of the boat, spoke no more.

Priscilla, who, cold and weary, had paid

but little attention to the movements of the two sailors, was roused by the awkward motions of the boat, and raised her head. Bred upon the sea-shore, she realized the whole danger. Unless the *Gannet* got well out into the horse-shoe bay, formed by Cape Wollomai and Cape Patterson, she would be unable to make the narrow passage between Pencarrow and Newhaven, and would be dashed to pieces on the rocks. On the other hand, if she kept too long on her present course, she would not have time to jibe before the coming gale, and would sink like a stone. The imminence of the danger gave the girl a false calmness, and she stood up to watch the result.

The lugger, running before the wind, leapt shivering out to sea. She was a good sailer, and Bickley's strong hand kept her so dead on her course that it seemed as though she were sailing on an upright keel.

At last, the moment came. An instant of dead thunderous calm, the air hot and heavy, and the sea like oil. Every stitch of canvas was taken in, and with naked spars they waited, breathless. Suddenly the atmosphere grew cold, and a rolling white line, topped with rain and spray, came hissing up on the starboard.

Bickley was equal to the occasion. Grasping the tiller with a hand of iron, he held the boat steady until the last possible minute.

"Now!" he cried, as the squall seemed about to overwhelm them—"steady by your fore-halyards! Now!—Up foresail and keep her dead away!"

The order was obeyed. The *Gannet*, spinning round like a top, was instantly enveloped in a cloud of salt smoke, and rising on the foremost wave, was borne straight into the left-hand curve of the

horse-shoe, bows on for the Narrows. The grey twilight had changed instantaneously into a pitchy darkness. Priscilla could not see her hand before her. She knew only that the tempest had overtaken them, and that their only chance of life was to run before it to the shelter of Western Port Bay.

"Steady!" cries old Phil. "There's no light yet. Steady!"

The *Gannet* ran down the narrow channel, between Phillip Island and Kilgunda, with the speed of a race-horse. They could see the Kilgunda lights, on the right, all blurred with rain, and peering through the salt blackness ahead, Phil kept the nose of the boat dead for the sheltering cliffs of Pencarrow.

The moment for which Priscilla longed, and yet dreaded, approached. In half-an-hour she would be back again in her

grandfather's arms, repentant and forgiven. Even as the thought passed through her brain, she heard a warning cry.

"That's a hail!" says Bickley. "What does it mean?"

A grey form seemed to rear itself out of the blackness and forge towards them.

"A boat!" cried Bickley. "Ahoy! Ahoy!"

The warning cry was repeated, and Priscilla shuddered — the voice seemed familiar to her. The lights of Newhaven flashed out on their left.

"The Reef!—the Reef!" cried Philip.

"No, no!" cried Priscilla. "The Beacon-lamp is our warning point, and we've not even seen it yet."

As she spoke, there was a grinding crash, and a rush of water. Alas, for the first time in sixteen years of storms the lantern had failed in its duty. As the *Gannet*

struck the rock where lay her father's bones, Priscilla comprehended that by her own wickedness she had caused her home to be deserted, and that even-handed justice had condemned her to lose her own life by the fact of that desertion.

A life-time of mental agony, an instant of physical pain, and then conflicting voices in her ears, strong hands catching at her, noises of wind and water, and finally a plunge into chillest oblivion and blackest darkness.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH WE HEAR AN EXPLANATION FROM GIPSY GEORGE.

When Priscilla opened her eyes it was broad daylight, and she was lying in the cottage of Mrs. Bickley. That excellent woman was sitting by the bedside, nursing the Heir-in-Gavel-kind and Borough-English.

"That's bravely, deary!" says the honest dame. "I'd a'most beleft that you'd never a-spoke more."

"Are they both saved?" asked Priscilla.

"Both," returned Mrs. Bickley, "and ha' bin lying about like two fire-spannels, drinking hot rum-and-water. Eh, but Harry-my-Friend is a man, that he is!"

"I knew it was he," said Priscilla, in a tone so low that it might have been called a whisper.

"Who else!" says Dame Bickley, austerely. "There's not another man in Pencarrow would ha' put off in such a night! Why, wench, he watched the boat all round Phillip Island, they say, and come off from Newhaven when he saw the course she took."

Priscilla turned her face away to hide a blush.

"Where is my grandfather?" said she.

Mrs. Bickley frowned, and fell to nursing the Heir laboriously.

"Chucky! chucky! chucky!

'Cattern and Clemen, be here, be here,
Give us your apples and give us your beer;
One for Peter,
Two for Paul,
And three for Him who made us all!'

Ho! ho! Georgy-boy, Saucy-boy!"

"Dear Mrs. Bickley, do tell me. Where is grandfather?"

"Well, he's in a terrible gürt hoe, surelye," says Mrs. Bickley. "They say he was all atop o' the house when he heard o' your flittin'."

"Oh, Mrs. Bickley, let me go to him," urged the poor girl, in tears.

"Bide where you be now. Bide where you be till Harry-my-Friend comes in. You can ask him."

"No, no!" cried Priscilla, in great terror. "I don't want to see him."

The good dame looked at her for a little while, and then, touched by compassion, said—"Wait till I come back, and I'll ask him myself."

So poor Priscilla lay in an agony of remorse and sorrow. What had happened? What did they think of her? Where was her grandfather?

Mrs. Bickley, returning, bids her rise and dress, saying that Harry-my-Friend, "having got the lent of a caärt," will drive both of them to the cottage. So Priscilla, wondering, dresses, and is assisted downstairs by the good dame, to find Harry-my-Friend, serious and solemn as ever, waiting with a spring-cart. He lifts her in tenderly enough, but says nothing; and the journey begins at a walk.

It is a bright afternoon, and the storm has cooled the air. Mrs. Bickley, with a woman's keen eye, sees the embarrassment of the pair, and talks to everybody and everything—Georgy-boy included—without taking breath or pausing for reply.

Upon the outward ears of the two folk who were playing out their little life-tragedy at each end of the jolting cart, there fell the following stream of simple domesticity:—

"My feather, he was a camsteery old gaffer surelye. He went to work at nine years old, and kep' on till he was somewhere about fower-and-twenty; and then a young ooman got him into trouble and he were forced to goo away to sea. When he came home he was drawed for the M'lisha and sarved ten year, and then he volunteered for a soger and sarved fifteen year, and then he comed back to the farm and worked fower-and-forty year, and was a lusty marn then. I dunnamany stoaries he toald—Dannel you, Georgy, I'll give you a meddlin' brent prenlsey if you doän't keep still!

"He was a sing'lar marn—a very sing'lar marn. I mind him saäyn to me one day—he says, ''tis a long time,' says he, 'sence I've took a holiday,' so 'cardingly, nex' marnin', he lay abed till purty nigh seven o'clock, and then he brakfastes, and then he

goos down to the shop and he buys fower ounces o' barca and sets hisself down on the maxon, and there he set and there he smoaked; and he smoaked, and smoaked, and smoaked the whole day long; 'for,' says he, ''tis a long time sence I've had a holiday!' He was a sing'lar marn—a very sing'lar marn, indeed.

"My sister she's married a cogging chap, as cockered her up with one stoary and 'nother. A deedy fellow he was! An' he left her one moarning with a bit of a dawlin and made awaay. She fretted herself—most disrightly she did; but I told her she'd no call to be so cluck over it. For my part I dunno but what she didn't oughter be glad, for he was a chuffy gudgeon chap as was always cokeing about the cupboards.

"Ah! and I've had my pettigues, too; for though my old man be middlin'

reasonable, sometimes he does get that half-baptized with beer, that I never seed such larmentable hem ornary marn in all my borns!"

With such flow of anecdote did good Mrs. Bickley beguile herself of the time until the spring-cart arrived at the cottage gate. Mounting for departure was Doctor Mellish, from Phillip Island, who looked curiously at Priscilla as Harry-my-Friend lifted her out.

"You had better go in," said Harry-my-Friend to Mrs. Bickley, and then busied himself about the harness. Priscilla looked at him piteously. She saw in that look that his face was worn and changed, and the tears came into her own eyes.

"Are you not coming, Harry?" she asked timidly.

"I must take back the horse and cart," said he, without turning.

"Oh, Harry, can you not forgive me?"

He looked up then with eyes of that reproachful trustfulness which we sometimes are happy enough to see in dogs, and said—

"I have forgiven you, Priscilla. I was more to blame than you. But there was no need to run away. You had but to tell me, and *I* would have gone. There, go in. Forget me, my dear—forget me!" And, without touching the hand she held out, he turned and climbed into the cart. The next moment Priscilla was face to face with her grandfather.

If she had been startled at sight of Harry's altered face, she was terrified at the change which had come over the old Captain. The deep lines with which the passions of the past few days had stamped his features, seemed retained there by some fierce and bitter effort of the will. The

gloom of other men's brows might be cleared by a burst of mental sunshine. John Tregarthen's eyes looked out fiercely exultant amid the clouds which lowered o'er them. He caught her by the wrist and led her into the little parlour.

"I have allowed you to come here, Priscilla, because I do not want to be needlessly cruel—but you come here for the last time."

"Grandfather!"

"Heaven has saved me from a great crime, and I will not again provoke its wrath. I have provided for you, you shall not starve."

"What do you mean, grandfather?" asked she, falling on her knees. "What have I done?"

"Done!" said the old man in a fierce whisper of amazement. "What have you done? Ruined the hopes of years. Thrown

away an honest man's love. Broken an old man's heart. And all for what—for what! To be the plaything of a villain!"

Priscilla sprang up, and with eyes suddenly dry, and cheeks crimson, confronted her grandfather with a passion that was all his own.

"So this is your faith in me! This is why you all stand aloof and will not take my hand. I see it all now! You reproach me for having no trust in you, and you have none in me—none in him. You are right to say that you will never see me more. I will leave you. Take me to my Husband!"

Tregarthen stood amazed, at once unwilling to believe, and ashamed to repeat his accusation. He stood and saw truth in her eyes, heard it in her voice. Choking he essayed to speak, but no words came. Two great tears welled over his eyelids,

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE NOBLE CAPTAIN TAKES THE CHAIR.

THE explanations between the three persons most interested in the business were brief though complete.

"I was afraid that you would be angry with me, Grandy," she said, "and so we agreed to go away and be married before you could stop us."

"I only wanted your happiness, deary," said the Captain.

"It was a mistake, a foolish, nay a wicked mistake," said Hardy seriously. "We should have trusted you."

"And *him*," added Priscilla. "He told

me just now that he would not have opposed us."

"It was my fault," said the Captain conclusively. "An old man's selfish fancy to order things as he would like to have them. We were nearly having a miserable Christmas!"

"But we'll have a merry one, Grandy," said Priscilla through her tears. "You shall celebrate my wedding!"

"We'll have up the township!" says the Captain, jumping at the idea.

"We'll give a breakfast that shall last until sundown," laughed Julius Hardy.

Amid their laughter broke in the sound of voices. There was a contest at the door, a trampling of feet. The rich Sussex accent of Dame Bickley, high in wrath, and then the well-known tones of the expounder of the virtues of the Heir-in-Gavel-kind—

"I tell you I *must* see him, I will see

him! God bless me, madam, I'm his legal adviser! I'll apply for a mandamus!"

"Jeremy Jerke, by all that's impossible!" cried Hardy.

It was not only Jeremy Jerke, but half the Corporate Body of the Companions.

"Got your explanatory letter, Julius," cries Jerke—"got it two hours after the Captain left land. I've done an act of gross injustice. Must remedy it. Captured the Noble Captain, seized the Good Lieutenant, put half-a-dozen other fellows into the coach, and here we are!—Comrades of the Cave, No FRILLS!"

"HONOUR!" responded Churchill, O'Gorman, and Scrimminger.

"The Native Companions," says Mr. Jerke, waving his hand towards them. "Mrs. JULIUS HARDY! Mrs. Julius Hardy, the NATIVE COMPANIONS!"

"With a hip, hip, hip—" suggested the Athlete.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"And," added the noble Captain, raising his somewhat dilapidated bell-topper, with the air of the shady side of Pall Mall, "if I may venture to invoke Euterpe—

For—or, *she'-s* a jolly good f-e-e-e-elow!"

To which the Companions responded in tones that made the welkin ring.

I doubt if my humble quill can do justice to the scenes which were enacted that evening.

It was Christmas Eve, and Tregarthen insisted that any and all in Pencarrow should come up and assist at the impromptu supper which was improvised on the spur of the moment by Mr. Jerke and Mrs. Bickley. The report that Miss Priscilla had not run away after all, but had only made an elopement for the purpose of

romantic marriage, had spread through the village, and the cottage was full of guests, all unaffectedly happy. As for Mrs. Bickley, who employed herself by making a huge pie, she was so overcome by emotion during the process that she at last leant upon the arm of Mr. Jerke and wept plentifully. Scrimminger vowed that, if he had but the *Penny Peepshow*, he would make his fortune by the reproduction of the scene; and Churchill went out at intervals and wrestled with fishermen. O'Gorman revelled in the splendour of his manhood, and did wonders with hammer and nails; while Jerke—in the intervals of pie-making—was good enough to enlighten the world upon the Art of Prolonging Life without Food, by looking after the Vital Point, or, as he called it epigrammatically, "The Spinal Fulcrum of the Mental Lever."

But when the evening fell in and the

Captain had lighted his Lamp again—with what tender reflections and unuttered prayers may well be guessed; when Mr. Julius Hardy, leaning on the arm of his wife and his wife's grandfather, took his seat at the head of the table; when the pie was opened solemnly—as though it were a Roman tomb, or Barrow, of immense value to antiquarians; when O'Gorman smacked his resounding chest and roared (in the ear of Churchill), that "By Heaven he must go forth and do great deeds!" for the purpose doubtless of reducing his superabundant stock of vitality; when the hospitable board gave out musical tones of clicking knives and clattering plates; when the air was rippling with laughter, and the whole company within the orbit of that glorious Planet of jollity and large-hearted merriment, called the Christmas Plum-pudding, *then* indeed did the full tide

of kindliness and mirth roll up, flooding all hearts, and washing away all mean and envious thoughts.

"Bumpers, gentlemen!" cried the Noble Captain. "Fill up brimming beakers, and drink to the health of the Bride and Bridegroom!"

Brimming beakers were filled accordingly, and the Noble Captain rose to deliver an Epithalamium in his grandest style—

"It affords me," said the Noble Captain; "a gratification bounded only by an æsthetic sense of the Finite to preside at such a banquet as that which now sheds about us a glory which it at once partakes and diffuses.

"Who has not groaned beneath that oppressive hospitality which destroys the repose essential to social enjoyment, that eager and indiscriminating profusion of attentions, which tends rather to excite wants than to anticipate them?"

"Hear, hear!" says the Athlete. "Simple herbs, and water from the brook for me!"

"Heaven forbid," continued the Noble Captain, "that I should contumeliously impugn the veracity of any man, but I confess that it irks me to give unhesitating credence to those who affirm that there is no middle goal between the broad expansion of soul-invigorating hilarity, and the pernicious exaltation of habitual intemperance.

"For my own part—a member of two universities, a lecturer, a scholar, a man of the world, and, I humbly trust, a Christian—I cultivate those moments when, bathed in joyous freedom, I can contemplate the sphered magnificence of a star, the perfumed delicacy of a flower, or the spiritual splendour of some enfranchised soul speeding through Arts and Sciences to its native home in the Empyrean, without the galling thought that Phormio or Philoctetes may ascribe

the promptings of enthusiasm to that momentary hyperæsthesia which is begotten by the foaming grape of Eastern France!"

"Beer for heroes!" cries Churchill. "The Anglo-Saxon sticks to beer, old man!"

"*Old* man!" said the Noble Captain, catching at the word. "I may be an old man. But I trust that the vigorous Milo, who, fresh from the Bath, the Gymnasium, and the Fencing School, feels pleasure in the mere act of living, will, at my age, oppose as sturdy a front to Time. Gentlemen! Friends! Comrades! it requires some philosophy, believe me, for one secretly conscious of waning powers, of the hollowness of friends, the selfishness of companions, the persistent implacability of foes, to serenely contemplate, at the end of life's vista, a lonely and deserted old age."

Churchill rose to order. He indignantly

repudiated any notion of hurting the feelings of the Noble Captain. He had used the words Old Man as a term of endearment merely.

The Noble Captain, upon this, suffered himself to be appeased, and after a digression on the subject of terms of endearment, diminutives, and household names, got round to the Toast.

"He had known," he said, "Julius Hardy long, and loved him. Placed in a position which he at once sustained, dignified, and adorned, Julius Hardy had claims upon the admiration of all whose hearts were capable of such a sentiment. For the young nosegay who bloomed by his side he could say nought in praise of so trim a piece of ductile femininity which would not find an echo in the vibrations of a thousand bosoms. The electricity of her eyes darted welcome poison, while the modulated coolness of

her voice fell like balm upon the wound. He had roamed through France and Germany, through sunny Spain and Italy. He had clambered Chimborazo, and touched at the Azores. But never had he seen a woman fitter to dispense the graceful courtesies of the breakfast-table or preside at the chastened ceremonies of prandial festivity than the grand-child of Captain Tregarthen."

A volley of cheering followed these sentiments, and Erasmus Rumbelow wisely followed up his advantage by a graceful allusion to the recent misunderstanding; and calling upon everybody to drink the health of Mr. and Mrs. Hardy, concluded by urging all present to

> "Dream no more that grief or pain
> Love-fraught hearts like theirs contain,
> What to them is loss or gain—
> They are one!"

"Gentlemen! Companions! Comrades! The Bride and Bridegroom!"

In the midst of all the cheering consequent upon this, the door opened, and in walked Harry-my-Friend.

The Captain, who had been cheering as lustily as any one, stopped suddenly, and sat down in his chair with a very red face. In his selfish joy he had quite forgotten the existence of the rejected suitor. Harry-my-Friend, however, did not give time for any awkward pause. With serious and kindly mien, he walked quickly down the room, and stopped in front of Mr. Julius Hardy.

"I have only just heard the truth, sir," said he; "and I have come to ask your pardon for the hard things I've said and thought about you since you left us."

Julius Hardy took the offered hand, not without some qualms of conscience, and shook it.

"Harry-my-Friend!" roars the Captain, "you are a trump. Sit down. Fill your glass."

Harry-my-Friend, bravely smiling the while, did sit down between the Captain and Priscilla, and filled his glass and drank it off without blinking an eyelid.

He was rewarded by feeling a little warm hand put into his own, and hearing Priscilla say in a proud whisper, "Dear Harry, I understand you; and though I cannot love you as you once hoped, I admire you more than any other man in the world. We will be friends."

He nodded in answer; for, as he returned the frank and fearless pressure of the hand he held, he recognized in the very freedom of the friendship thus proffered the hopelessness of the dream he had been weak enough to cherish.

However, he had no time to indulge in

vain sentiment, had he wished to do so. Mr. Julius Hardy, in returning thanks, related the story of the wreck of the *Gannet*, and called upon all present to give three cheers for his friend Harry Ragner,—and Harry-my-Friend had to reply. Then there was the toast of Tregarthen and Co., and Harry had to stand up beside the Captain and propose the Native Companions, coupled with the name of Mr. Jerke.

Mr. Jerke's speech was—so he afterwards asserted—"Kikeronian," and he astonished Bickley almost into catalepsy.

"The Native Companions," Mr. Jerke asserted, "were a society established for the purpose of philosophically considering the end and aim of the moral development of man. He himself had devoted many hours to the consideration of the Problem of Life, and he had come to the conclusion that the actions of each one of them were

guided by principles as immutable as the law of gravity. Some of them, perhaps, were surprised to see Mr. Julius Hardy at the end of that table in the character of a married man."

"Hear, hear! We are!" from several of the guests.

"He," Mr. Jerke, "was not surprised at all. Coming down on the coach he had worked out the problem of Mr. Hardy's conduct, and had come to the conclusion that Mr. Hardy could have done nothing else in the world but just exactly that which he had done. This conclusion he had arrived at by a process of reasoning which he called Moral Dynamics. He would explain.

"Most of his hearers were aware that it had been ascertained by numerous observations and experiments that Velocities can be compounded by the same laws as Statical

Forces. The composition of Velocities may indeed be considered as a consequence of the elementary ideas of Time and Space, and he held that inasmuch as by substituting Velocities for Pressures the result of Statics can be transferred to Dynamics, so by substituting Moral for Physical Forces, the indisputable logic of Mechanics can be applied with equal certainty to the solution of questions of Moral Responsibility. For instance—

"Let the Orange which he held in hand be his friend Mr. Julius Hardy. Mr. Julius, operated upon by the influences of Youth and Love-of-Pleasure, is moving in the direction of Utter-Destruction-of-Mind-and Body, which he would represent by the Plate-of-Almonds-and-Raisins, at a velocity which would bring him to the Salt-Cellar or a Pauper's-Grave in five years. Was that clear? Good!

"Now bearing in mind that the Orange still represents Mr. Julius Hardy, he would ask them to permit the Water-Bottle to represent the Monastery-of-La-Trappe, and imagine his friend Hardy, still in the form of the Orange, impelled towards it with a velocity which would bring him to a Vow-of-Celibacy, as represented by the Jam-Tart, in sixty calendar months. What would be the result?

"Why, the effect of both velocities acting conjointly would be to do just exactly that which they had done,—to deposit the Orange, that is to say Mr. Julius Hardy, at the point found by completing the Parallelogram—(His Hand, the Salt-Cellar, the Jam-Tart, and the Opposite Chair)—namely, Matrimony!"

And rolling the orange as he spoke into the lap of the blushing Priscilla, Jeremy Jerke sat down proudly conscious of having

talked the most plausible nonsense he had ever uttered in his life.

Mr. Churchill then rose to propose the Ancient Virtues of Collar and Elbow wrestling, and took occasion to enter upon a dissertation concerning the admirable manner in which the possession of those attributes served or might have served Mr. Julius Hardy.

"Ethnologists have proved," said Mr. Churchill, "that but two forms of marriage are known to mankind—Marriage by Purchase, and Marriage by Capture. The former method has been for some time in use among the so-called civilized nations. The increased cost of living, the prejudice against manual labour, and the physical feebleness of artificially-reared Females, are causes which co-operate in producing this result. When any of the Goim—if, as a Native Companion, he might be permitted

to apply that term to the congregation of mediocrities outside the walls of the Cave —desired a wife, they bought one for so much a year in probable income, or for a certain specified sum in cash. The poorer males, following the same principle, often succeeded—when endowed by nature with handsome countenances—in selling themselves at a high figure to persons of the opposite sex. This sordid and disgraceful custom, however, had become so hallowed by observance that persons who entered into matrimony without the acquisition of a handsome money-bonus by one or the other, were looked upon as foolish and unbusiness-like people wholly unsuited for the ennobling occupation of Acquiring Property."

"Simply immense!" is Patsy O'Gorman's comment, as Mr. Churchill pauses for breath.

"Marriage by Capture," continues the Wrestler, "is a very different affair. Sanctified by the practice of the Patriarchs, the Ancients, and the more enlightened of the inhabitants of the Orient, it survives to this day among those people who have escaped the pernicious influences of the Press, the Telegraph, and the March of Intellectual Progress. Herodotus, Plutarch, Festus, and Livy, all agree in their accounts of the practice, and Apuleius in his admirable novel *De Asino Aureo*, or the Story of the Golden Ass, gives a vivid description of the ceremony. The Hindus in the Satras, the Khonds in the hill tracts of Orissa, the Kalmucks on the shores of the Caspian Sea, the Tunguzes and Kamchadales in Siberia, the Bedouins of the Sahara, the Circassians of the Caucasus, the aboriginals of the Australian continent, and the intelligent natives of Tierra del Fuego, obtain

wives by this means alone. Rejoicing in their manhood, confident in their personal prowess, and believing that he who wishes to retain must first prove able to acquire, they scorn the degrading custom which barters beauty for bullocks, and carry off their brides, the prizes of their bow and their spear. This is the practice of Primitive Man, and this is the practice which Mr. Julius Hardy has so nobly revived."

O'Gorman responded on behalf of Muscularity generally.

"When I see,' said the Athlete, rearing aloft arms like wings, and wrinkling his nose in supreme contempt of all created things,—"When I see the grand forms of these men, their muscles, their sinews, their broad brows helmeted with courage, by Jove, sir! I say to myself—'Up! up, you poor creature! Up, and be doing!'"

Scrimminger proposed our Absent Friends,

and took occasion to read a letter from Companion Corboy, now engaged in developing the resources of Dunolly. Companion Corboy had been weather-bound in a wayside inn, and had profited by the enforced idleness to exercise his Inventive Faculty.

"'In this forced physical inaction,'" wrote Companion Corboy, "'I have been able to give my mind abundant exercise, and the outcome of it is that I could now write the first volume of a book, which would epitomize the universe, and take all scientists captive!'"

"Good!" cries Churchill. "What is it?"

"'One immediate *practical* consequence,'" continued Mr. Scrimminger, with a severe and reproachful emphasis upon the word *practical*,—"'One immediate practical consequence of this perception of the Law of Things Universal, is a compass-needle non-magnetic, ever true to the true north,

undeflected by the proximity of iron, steel, or any other substance likely to be on ship-board!' "

"That's a caulker, anyhow!" interjected the Captain.

"'I need not enlarge upon the world-wide value of such a discovery,'" went on Scrimminger. "'The safety of ships and assurance of accuracy in field-work and navigation, are among the least of the benefits my Invention would bestow upon mankind. Verily my time has not been wasted, my solitude has not been gloom, my physical sufferings have been a mental joy. But now I should cease to contemplate and commence to act.'"

"Ay, ay! So he should!" says Bickley, who has been listening open-mouthed.

"'It is needful for me to give bodily shape to my thoughts. To be debarred from this gratification, to be cut off from

this complement of the angle of thought, to be denied this just reward of mental toil, is Destruction!' "

"Does he name the sum?" asks Erasmus Rumbelow.

"He mentions seven pounds thirteen and ninepence as being——"

"Ah! Proceed!" says Rumbelow. "What of the gold-mines?"

"He says," continues Scrimminger, turning over the letter, "that he has *read* the country. Here it is—'I have read this country geologically, and can say where the gold rested before it was washed down into the gullies, and I can tell where nuggets *ought* to be sought; only I cannot tell why gold was found in grains here and in masses there. Did I know this, I could pounce down upon the larger nuggets pretty accurately.' "

"By Jove!" cries Hardy, "he'll make all

our fortunes. Why doesn't he go to work at once?"

"His reason is very sufficient," said Scrimminger, somewhat huffed at the way in which the scientific remarks of his friend had been received. "He says—'My clothes, especially my boots, are so dilapidated that I fear to attempt any violent exercise within them, lest they burst asunder immediately.'"

"Dear old madman!" cried Churchill, amid the roars of not unkindly laughter which followed this delicious anti-climax. "Here's a merry Christmas to him wherever he is!"

"Amen to that," said the Noble Captain. "A merry Christmas to him and to all of us."

This was the last health, and after it the party broke up, Bickley to drive his wife and heir back to Pencarrow, and the Com-

panions to their inn. With hearty hand-shakings and wishes for his welfare, the Noble Captain, the Good Lieutenant, and the Worthy Ancient congratulated their new comrade, and the Athlete, turning at the door to catch a last kind glance from Priscilla's brimming eyes, slapped Churchill on the back and cried, "If Spinner were here now, Great Soul, we'd go back to Melbourne and ANNIHILATE CIVILIZATION!"

Harry-my-friend had lingered till the last.

"Good-bye, Priscilla, my dear," he said. "I wish you all and every happiness."

"I can never make you understand my gratitude," said Julius Hardy, earnestly.

"I am dull, sir, I know," says Harry-my-Friend. "I understand what is done easier than what is described. If you have kindly feelings for me, be—be kind to her, sir, for my sake;" and he turned.

"You are not going, Partner?" asks the Captain.

"I have much to do," said Harry-my-Friend, with his usual grave smile. "You forget that, if some make holiday, the others must work. No—I will not stay. Some other time. To-morrow!" and he was gone.

He went out into the cool night, and, walking quickly away from the scene of happiness in which he had no part, made his way to the cliff which overlooked the bay.

As he came out upon the turfy ridge he heard the deadened sound of hoofs, and presently alongside him George Meggot reined in his half-broken horse.

The gipsy was evidently bound for a journey. A rug of opossum and bear skins was strapped to the pommel of his saddle. From his shoulders floated a poncho of scarlet blanket. The cockatoo, chained to his bridle wrist, sat perched upon his shoulder.

His gun, its butt in a leathern bucket fixed to his right-hand girth, lay under his arm, with trigger convenient to his hand. By his side his kangaroo dogs leaped and bounded. Seeing Harry-my-Friend he jerked his horse upon its haunches.

"So! The befooled lover!" he cried. "Good-night! My curse on this place, on you, and him, and her!"

Harry-my-Friend laid a restraining hand upon the bridle of the rearing and terrified horse. "George Meggot," he said, "did you really love this poor girl?"

George Meggot for reply fiercely laughed and shook his hand in air.

"Because," said Harry-my-Friend, "if you love her you should bless, not curse her."

Gipsy George paused, astonished.

"And do you bless her?" he asked, with something of softness in his black eyes.

"Ay! surely!" said Harry-my-Friend.

God bless her! I wish to see her happy; for," he added, as though in explanation, "had she married me, you see, my lad, I meant to make her so."

Some spirit of barbaric nobility came upon Gipsy George. His eyes grew dim, his voice failed him. He wrenched his bridle free, caught the fisherman's hand in his own, and then, with no curse, but a cry of farewell that might have been a sob, he drove spurs into his snorting horse, and plunged—a Bedouin of Bedouins—into the desert bush which had bred him.

Harry-my-Friend stood sadly looking for a little while down the track which the wild boy had taken, and then sat himself quietly down on the brow of the cliff.

Sitting there, with the myriad stars shining above him, with the waves murmuring at his feet, and the soft night wind breathing balm on his brow, he gathered to himself what of comfort there was to be in

his life. A great sorrow had passed over him, but it had not unmanned him. He saw his duty clearly. His was to be the guiding hand—the warning voice. He was to be the Friend—as he had ever been. He saw himself, in the future, if not happy, at least peaceful. He saw himself a grey-haired man, with Priscilla's husband coming to him for counsel, with Priscilla's children climbing on his knees. Priscilla's children! —how he should love them! And then as the thought of all that might have been drove the iron into his soul, he bowed his head and wept.

What unhappy fortune was his! He had garnered up his heart's wealth to enrich one whom he found contented without such gift. He had prepared himself to sacrifice all of self for one who needed no such generosity. Oh, she had shown herself mean, cowardly, unworthy of him! Yet, what signified her unworthiness? He loved

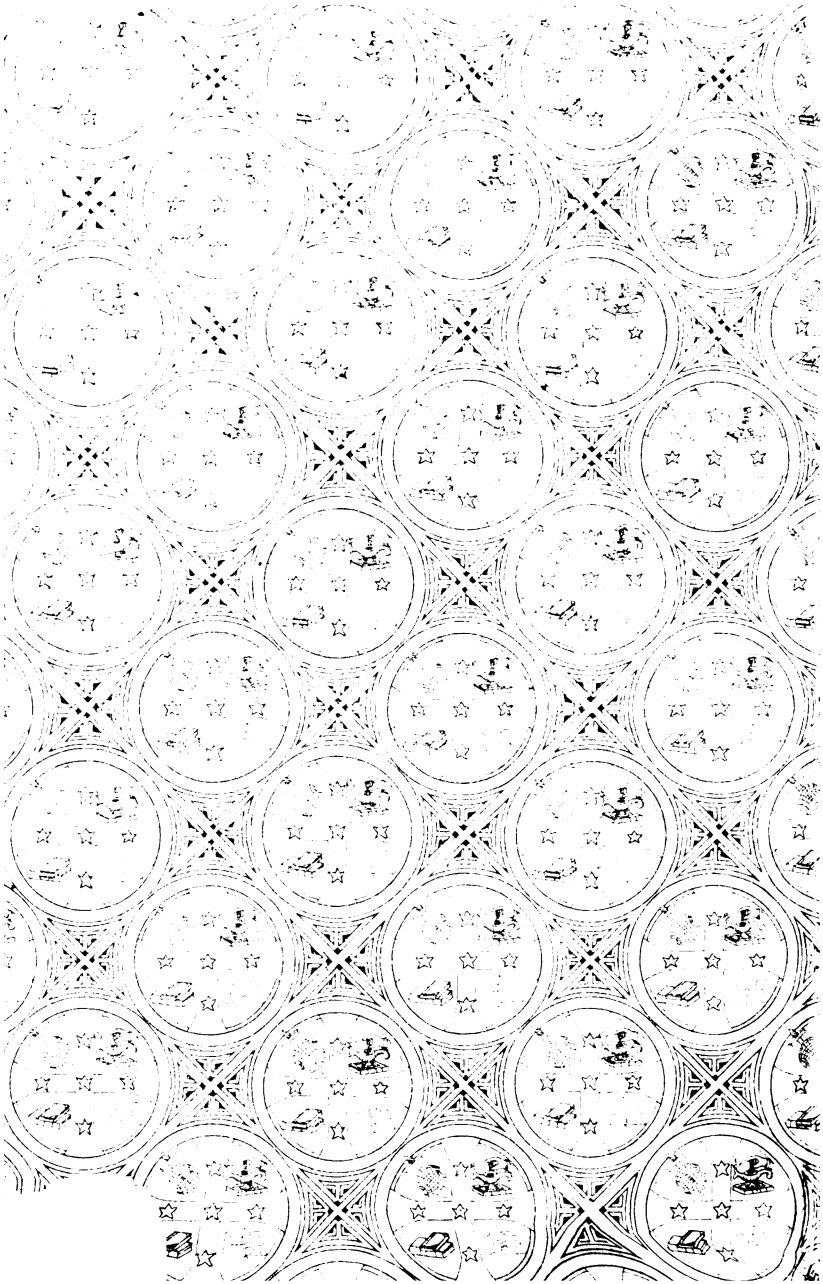
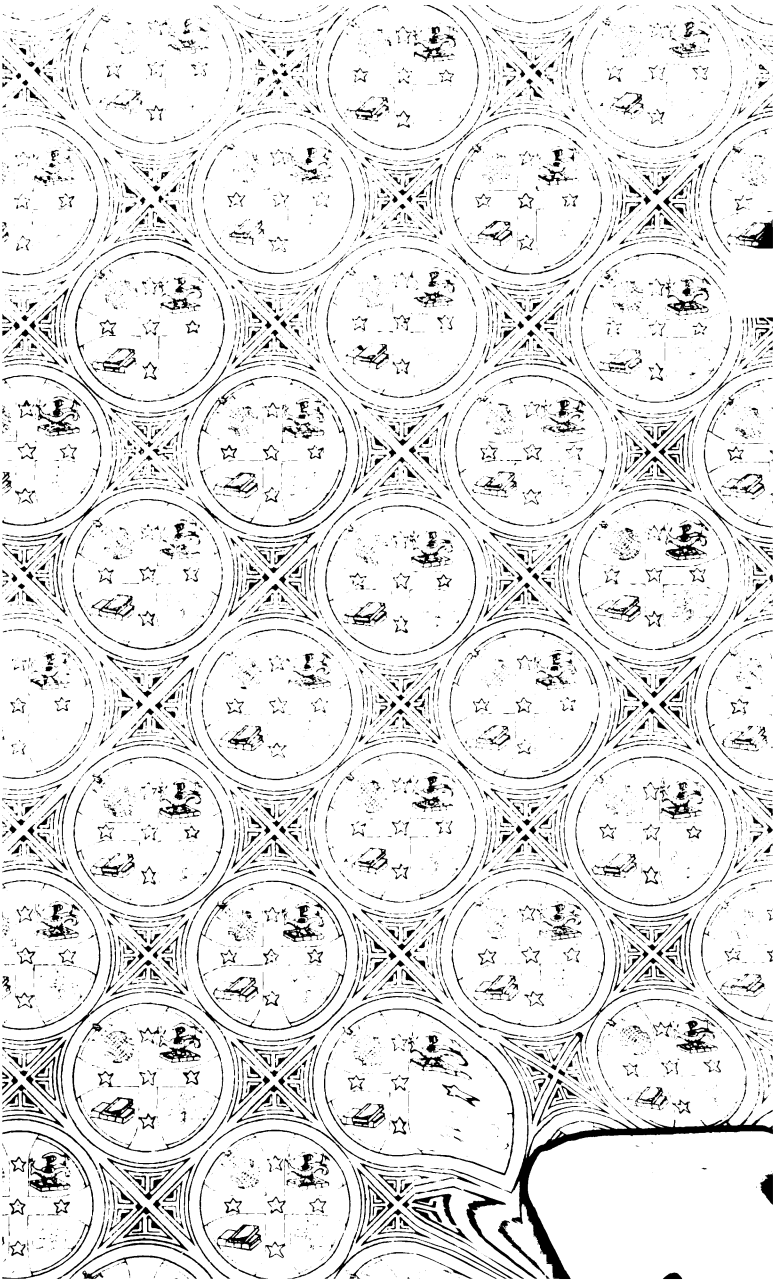
her—loved her fatally—as some souls are foredoomed to love—and by so much as she fell short of his ideal of her, by so much did his increased passion strive to raise her to it. Married, and love-married, to another, she was no more for him. He had lost her love, and must be content to lose it. Nevertheless he made no pretence of not loving her. Such subterfuge was for smaller minds, for compromising tradesmen-spirits. He loved her, loved her still, would love her ever. He would not insult her by making, even in thought, an effort to pluck out and trample upon her sweet image, as he might pluck out a mean desire or trample upon an unworthy wish. No! Let seas divide them—let unjust slander or just wrath separate them—let even each, misunderstood of each, be almost hated: still, deep down beneath the worldly surface of his soul that one self-glorifying, self-abnegating, most spiritual, purest love

of his for her should live, and in its life console and beautify his own, sustain and comfort hers.

He wept, but the tears he shed were not too bitter. Courage and honour upheld him. Serene in his manhood, he rose erect and turned back to where lay his life's duty. Night had passed with its Shadow and day had come with its Shine. The sun was rising, the birds twittered in the wattle-boughs, the waves glittered. From the little wooden school-house tinkled the tones of the bell ringing in Christmas morning. The door of the verandah on the Captain's cottage opened, and the Captain appeared to remove the low-burning Beacon-lamp. He saw Harry-my-Friend, and gave a cheery halloo. Priscilla and her husband came out and stood in the porch. Harry-my-Friend, the sunlight golden on his face, went down to meet them.

The story of "Shadow and Shine" ends, then, after all, in the good old fashion, with ill fortune for evil-doers and happiness for all brave and true hearts!

We will hope so, kindly reader; but, in truth, I know not at this moment how the story ends. Even as I write, the bright sea, the pretty cottage, the moving figures vanish. There is nothing but my blotted manuscript. Nothing—save that on the table stands a battered ship's lantern; while through the open window the perfume of the wattle-blossom is borne in to me upon the wafting music of the Christmas bells!

"———When the wattle gold trembles
'Twixt Shadow and Shine,
When each dew-laden air draught resembles
A long draught of wine;
When the sky-line's blue burnished resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance,
Some song in all hearts hath existence:
Such songs have been mine."

GR